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ABSTRACT

This publication contains 37 stories, vignettes, and poems written by participants in the British Columbia Buildings Corporation Workplace Language Program. The pieces center on family, work, people, and places and were written by people who decided to learn how to improve their language skills. They represent slices of employees' lives as they explored and grew through their experience with the program. The book shows by topic and tone that there is a process that achieves substantial and measurable advances. As a whole, the writings represent the life experience of women and men who make up a part of the Canadian work force. (YLB)

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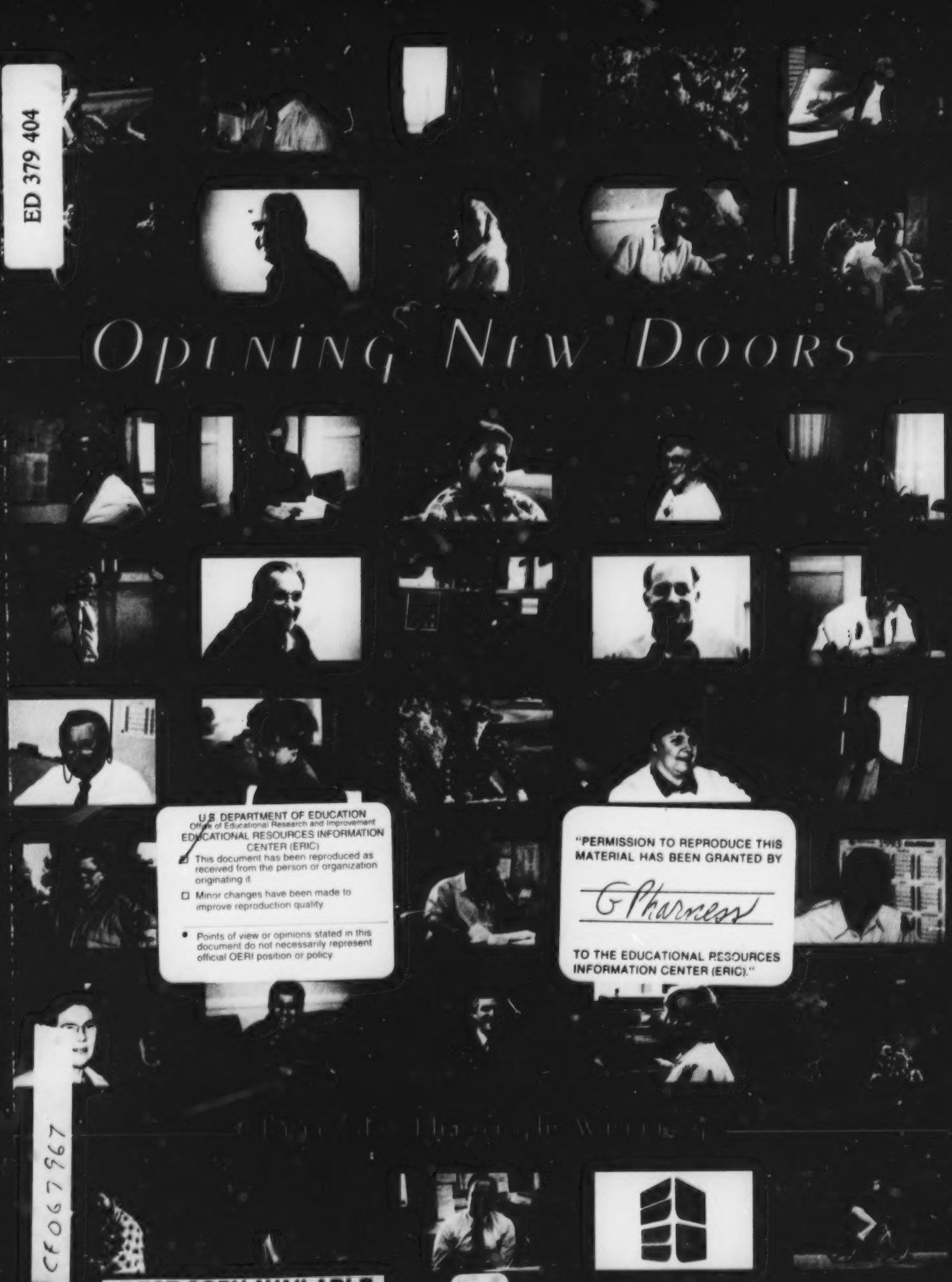
Opening New Doors



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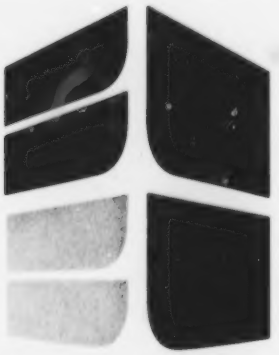
Opening New Doors



BC
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Acknowledgements

The publisher would like to thank the writers for permission to reproduce their work in this volume. Besides the writers presented here, some comments about the Workplace Language Program are included because they acknowledge the writers as well as speak to the issue of language in the workplace.

About four years ago, as part of our business plan, I wanted to provide my people access to some basic program that would give them skills that they could apply in their every day life.

Little did I know, at that time, that this basic program, Language Training, would turn out to be a great success some three years later.

What you are about to experience, reading these stories, is not the result of some complicated, convoluted, or intense teacher based program, but, rather it's about what happens when one is given the chance to learn in his/her work environment. Yes; to learn; to discover about one's inner self; to discover one's voice.

The elements for this to happen, apart from the right physical environment, revolve around self. One must trust self and others. One must see what one wants. One must be prepared to take a risk. Risk is the most difficult to accept and therefore the most critical. The risk of allowing others to see the real you, to know your real feelings, to know your desires, passions, and secrets that remain camouflaged behind the great facade. Yes, the risks are great, however, the rewards are greater.

The rewards are more than seeing your writing in print, more than the accolades from fellow students and teachers. The rewards are growth – personal growth: growth from within that goes beyond one's self. Rarely does one have the opportunity to grow, particularly as one ages, becomes more mature and increasingly set in one's ways.

When I reflect back, which one appears to do more often as the years tick by, I have gathered many fond memories over the years of giving leadership to the people that I have had the privilege to work with. However, my enamored memory of choice, without a doubt, will be about the people whose words are bound between these covers. After all, they are the ones that trusted in self and others: they are the ones with vision; and they are the ones who took the risk.

Hans Wenger, Property Manager, P.M.U. 10, B.C. Buildings Corporation

I commend this book to you and congratulate our employees whose works are presented in this publication.

The Workplace Language Program in BCBC has been very successful in not only drawing people out, but also in bringing together people from different occupations and parts of the Corporation.

Communication and understanding language are essential to the continued well-being of BCBC, and this language program has certainly made a major contribution toward the achievement of our goals.

This book is a success that we can all celebrate proudly. Until now, some of the more tangible indications of the Corporation's success have been related to our buildings and services we provide; this book, by showing something of the people within BCBC, is another solid indication of what makes us the organization we are.

Dennis Truss, President and CEO, B.C. Buildings Corporation

Whoever said, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," never met the people from BCBC – particularly the people who wrote this book!

These stories are about family, about work, about people, about places. They are about smoking and shopping and springtime and piglets and power and pudding.

Most important, these stories were written by people who decided to learn how to improve their language skills – people just like you.

These stories were written by winners – people just like you.

Al Kemp, Vice-President, Property Management, B.C. Buildings Corporation.

I appreciate the opportunity to write a few lines in this book. I think the book truly speaks for itself and I congratulate all the participants for their personal successes.

The person behind this program, Gary Pharness, has the vision. He's not promoting language training so much as he is promoting "thinking". He sees the bigger picture and patiently moves, stops and talks to those who FEEL he has something to say.

The stories, vignettes and poems are slices of our employees' lives as they explore and grow through their experience with this program. This book shows by topic and tone that there is a process here that achieves advances that are both substantial and measurable. The program builds on the premise that language is a social construct of what is human.

The great photos and all the editing and layout work are the results of the dedication of Linda Calahan. Both Gary and Linda have spent hours with this project and it shows.

Thank you both for this handsome book and the program it represents.

Grant Close, Director, Human Resources, B.C. Buildings Corporation

Introduction

The stories that appear in **Opening New Doors – Friends Through Writing** *have been gathered throughout the past year and a half from the B.C. Buildings Corporation Workplace Language Program. The generosity and openness of the writers is evident in their willingness to share these personal experiences and private feelings with strangers. Like all writers these writers have given the gift of themselves.*

Opening New Doors – Friends Through Writing *is filled with stories about the everyday and the tragic, about the humorous and the matter-of-fact. As a whole the stories give us the life experience of women and men who make up a part of the Canadian workforce, and who give us their part of the Canadian identity.*

At B.C. Buildings Corporation there is no "typical" workplace. There are only many different kinds of work, many different kinds of people, and many different kinds of work cultures: administrative, trades, human resources, building service work and real estate. What all of these work cultures share in common is language for expression of ideas and feelings.

Opening New Doors – Friends Through Writing *brings together a number of B.C. Buildings Corporation work cultures and the people working in those cultures.*

Finally, a few comments about the writing. Stylistically, these workplace writers write simply and with directness. Most of the voices we hear are recognizable, sounding much like ourselves. And, in the different voices we seem to hear these writers saying over and over that what they have done in writing to express their worlds, we, too, can just as easily do if we but set our minds to it.

I want to thank all of our people who chose to take a risk and participate in our workplace Language Training program.

Also, I want to thank Linda Calahan and Gary Pharness for their dedication, their persistence and their determination. Without Gary, many of the stories you are about to read would remain unwritten! Without Linda, this book would remain unpublished!

Thank you.

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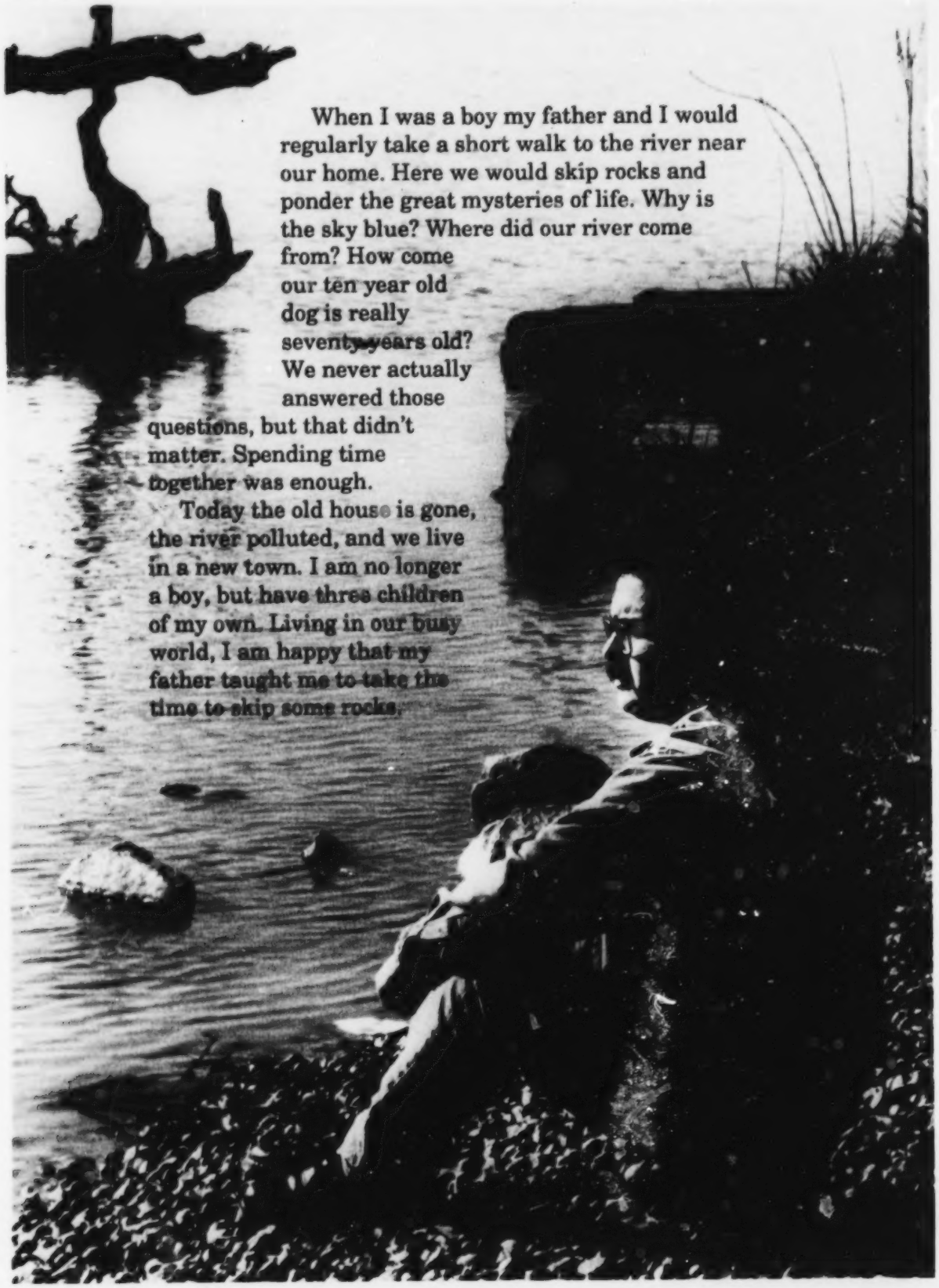

When I was a boy my father and I would regularly take a short walk to the river near our home. Here we would skip rocks and ponder the great mysteries of life. Why is the sky blue? Where did our river come from? How come our ten year old dog is really seventy years old? We never actually answered those questions, but that didn't matter. Spending time together was enough.

Today the old house is gone, the river polluted, and we live in a new town. I am no longer a boy, but have three children of my own. Living in our busy world, I am happy that my father taught me to take the time to skip some rocks.

Language

Cultus, schklep, camoot: these are a few words of a language that have been lost to me and my family.

My maternal grandmother was a respected elder of the Hat Creek Band, members of the Shuswap People. Alice Yerxi passed away when I was very young, and I treasure my memories of a weathered looking but beautiful woman who always had time for a small boy. She would talk to me for hours about our family and would tell her favourite stories, always using those wonderful but hard to understand words.

After Grandma was gone I never heard anyone speaking our language. The importance of our heritage seemed to be lost in the business of life. To have, and to be able to pass on the knowledge and history of our language to my children would fill the emptiness I now feel.

I'm lucky that a few distant friends still know our language. At every opportunity I talk to them to learn what I can. On each occasion I come away with a feeling of admiration and wonder for people who know so much. With perserverance, maybe I will learn, too.

Mr. Bure

Am I going through the same situations that Pavel's father went through only a few years ago? My young son is hockey crazy, and Pavel Bure is his hero.

Matthew spends the whole day talking and playing hockey, either at his table top game or in the garage shooting a ball into the net. He is driving his family crazy, always asking us to play with him.
This is Matthew's first year on skates. His four year old legs have a lot more stamina than his father's older legs and I am always ready to quit long before he is. Between public skating and skating lessons he gets on the ice a couple of times a week. For him this is not nearly enough. We would skate everyday if he had his choice.

Back to Pavel. Matthew has a poster of him on his wall. He knows all about him and wants to be just like him. Matthew will tell anyone who will listen that one day he will skate as well as Pavel Bure. I was going to buy Matthew Pavel's hockey cards, but at eight and twenty dollars each, he will have to wait awhile.

Did Pavel's father go through the 3 a.m. hockey practices, his son's hero worship and the endless hunt for inexpensive equipment? I'm sure he did, and as long as Matthew is having fun, I will, too.

Gunner Rognan

The Baker

It's my wife's birthday tomorrow so we need a birthday cake for the celebration. "That's easy," was the reply from my friend. "All we have to do is follow instructions and we can bake that wonderful cake." "OK," I said, as I reached up and picked out a box with *cake mix* written on it. We agreed to follow the instructions and do exactly what it said.

Step 1) Set oven for 375°. Easy!

2) Make sure all utensils and bowl are clean and do not use plastic. Easy!

3) Take contents from package A, hand mix with 3/4 cup of water, whip. Another easy step!

4) Now add contents from package B into mix and fold. Oh, oh! What does fold mean? We knew what folding clothes was but not folding cake mix. After consulting our wives, this step was now easy!

5) After folding mix, pour contents into an angel food cake pan and place in oven. Easy!

6) Now allow about forty minutes baking time.

That meant setting the timer, which I did with great care.

Now with these steps accomplished we were able to join our wives in the front – room and wait.

Hearing the buzzer, I quickly leapt from my comfortable chair, bounding into the kitchen to check on my prize cake. What! The batter was double the size that

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it was when first put into the oven, but it was still white. Maybe we should leave it in longer, for the instructions read about 40 minutes. My friends had to leave, leaving me with my unbaked cake problem. So, my wife walked the two of them to their car while I studied the baking situation. On closer scrutiny the fact the oven was turned off came to my attention. When setting the timer an idiot had hit the automatic timer and shut the heat off. Oh well, there is a solution to every problem. Turning the oven on solved it.

Hearing the buzzer, I quickly leapt from my comfortable chair, bounding into the kitchen to check on my prize cake. What!!

Once the timer had been turned on a little man was released in my oven. This little guy carried a paint brush and paint. Boy, did he ever work fast. I guess the extra oven heat on his toes made his brush work to the max. Watching the colouring change on my cake was phenomenal. It was as if each stroke of his brush made the colour change from white to light brown to darker brown. Then he had the audacity to dip his brush in the black paint, first a light black and then he started adding extra layers. The time for action had come. Even an inexperienced baker knows that when black appears, one must move quickly because the cake must be done. I understood the instruction was to have a cake cooling rack on the counter, then I needed to turn the cake upside down on top of the rack.

This cook had the intelligence to put his rack in the right place on the counter. Since that critter was still working on my beautiful cake, I quickly jumped to the last step.

Swish. Splat! All over my cooling rack and over my counter. Due to my great intelligence the rack was by the sink. Well, another swish and running water, my cake ended up down the drain. After cleaning up this mess, the phone rang. It was our wonderful neighbour. After explaining to her what had happened, I turned to my wife and said, "Sorry, no cake tomorrow."

Guess what? A beautiful angel food cake appeared on the back step the next morning. Thank goodness for wonderful and thoughtful neighbours.

Two Pink Piglets

Spring, what a wonderful time of the year. Snow disappears and dirty pens show the evidence of winter's end. Work on the farm is never done. The cleaning of pens, barn and chicken coops are all a part of spring work.

With the pig pen cleaned and new, dry hay fluffed in the sleeping area, the pen was ready for action. I had my first opportunity to buy the occupants for the pig's home. Looking over the litter in the neighbour's barn, I picked the two strongest, noisiest and cutest creatures. The two pink piglets, just weaned from the mother, snuggled together in the corner under a makeshift heat lamp. What a sight to behold.

Now the opportunity of feeding and nurturing these critters was mine. Milk, chop (crushed grain) pig pellets and leftovers from our table were the main part of their diet. In a few weeks the occupants had doubled their weight and were strong enough to have the heat lamp removed.

Now the fun began: the chasing and teasing of these critters. Their nonchalance changed to aggression. Hurray. The more they tried to catch my friend and me the more we liked it. The pigs were no danger to us, for we were faster than them and the fence was a safe place to jump to.

But with food disappearing and the pigs not getting any fatter, someone was getting suspicious. The "caught ya" came. Father caught two little kids teasing his pigs. Ouch! That was the end of the fun.

Laundry

Oh to be home
Bottom of the hospital
Best of friends
Dirt came to an end
Make a game happen
To take away the stink

Oh! to be home
The line is full of soiled
Laundry, barf, blood, shit
Garbage came down all day
Hospital threw everything into
Laundry bags, let us have it

Oh! to be home
Eddy fixing the washers
J.C. sucking a beer
Dung falling off the ceiling
What dear memories
Comrades we were

Oh! to be home
Gameful and drunk
Speak with a teary eye
Was not always a lark
Remember the good times
As well as the bad

Oh! to be home

Courses

Courses, courses, courses, how many more courses do I take? It would seem as though I have been taking courses since the beginning of time. They all benefit me, but supposedly to increase my occupational standing. I am presently involved in public speaking at BCIT to improve myself and to be able to talk more easily in public or board meetings or interviews. I presume this language course will help me much more. In fact this Thursday is my day off and I will still come in for 3 hours because of the benefits. I am grateful for the opportunity for self improvement.

I know that life is a continuous learning cycle and that one never stops learning. As a matter of fact when I went to BCIT to start a computer course, my mind felt like it had been in cold storage. It took a couple of weeks to get my mind working properly. After the mildew was scrubbed off, my mind seemed to work surprisingly well. So, throw on the courses that I may grow and help myself and in return in the future, I will be stepping up the corporate ladder because of all these courses. Maybe life is an ongoing COURSE??

Cold Beef Sandwiches

One of the few things I hated as a child was cold beef sandwiches. My mother made them a lot for my father; she didn't have time to make me some other kind. I'm writing this because it was funny and I didn't get any marks for my first scientific experiment in bacteria.

In grade one, the class was split into two parts. One part sat at old tables, six guys to a table. The other part of the class sat at individual desks. I sat at one of those old tables. Then my teacher announced, "In December, the students who have the best marks will move to an individual desk." Boy! did I want my own desk.

Well, the cold beef sandwiches were always in my lunch bucket. God, I really hated those things. What to do with them? The only thing I could think of was to shove them deep in the back of my allotted space in that old table. December rolled around and I noticed that 1/3 of my space was jammed full of cold beef sandwiches. I was running out of space for my good stuff and my books. I couldn't

figure out why no one complained about the smell. The smell was even starting to bother me!

I was a whip in school. All I had to do was listen periodically and I would remember what the teacher had said. On the day before Christmas break my teacher said, "Arne, you move to an individual desk." I stood up, so proud, and moved all my belongings to my new desk. Adeline was moving to my old table. I had a crush on her something bad. Every time I looked at her I just melted. She was peachy cream.

Adeline was screaming non-stop. Poor Adeline had stuck her hand in several layers of slimy, blue, mold ridden, cold beef sandwiches.

I was very comfortable and proud at my new desk. Then a scream, that scared everyone, ripped through the entire room. Adeline was screaming non-stop. Poor Adeline had stuck her hand in several layers of slimy, blue, mold-ridden cold beef sandwiches. Was that funny or what? Adeline didn't think so; my teacher almost got sick. "Arne, come and clean out that terrible mess of garbage from your old table," demanded my teacher. You know what? I got a detention for that. Tom also had a detention that day, but he was a bad boy!

We stayed there it seemed like days, cleaning blackboard erasers. Then our teacher said, "I'm going over to the principal's office." Wow! an opening. We spied her crossing the playfield, and like Jacks we were off, never thinking or daring to look back at our place of detention.

Several years later I came across my grade one teacher. Out of curiosity I went over to ask what happened when I got back to school after that daring escape. "Was the punishment that devastating that perhaps I have a mental void?" I inquired. She began to laugh and said, "Nothing happened. As you two made for home or parts unknown, I saw you out of the corner of my eye and laughed for you always made the school day exciting and a lot more fun," she laughed. "Thank you very much for hating cold beef sandwiches and being you," she uttered as she walked to her class.

It took seven years to find out what happened to me upon returning to school after Christmas break. I thought there was something seriously wrong, but it was just a very good teacher. The only thing that was hurt was my heart; Adeline never spoke to me from that day on.

Eva Pearson

Golden Ears

I have a spectacular view of the Golden Ears Mountains from my front room window. The mountains seem to change with the weather. In the fall they are a profusion of colour, different shades of green cover the hillside from a pale to an emerald green intertwined with a golden orange to deep red.

In winter they seem to change the most, starting with the first snow fall when the trees become dusted with a white powder and the clouds encircle them like a wreath. On certain days when the mountains are covered with a glistening white snow and the sun reflects off the peaks, they become a pale orange standing out against the dark blue sky.

As the seasons change so do the mountains, giving an ever changing look at the wonders of nature.

Daughter

Long blonde hair
Gently caressing your face
Large soft brown eyes
Twinkling with delight
Smiles turning into laughter
On your sweet young face

Frilly dress and fancy shoes
You twirl around the room
A make believe world
Of tea parties and dolls
This is the time
For you alone to hold

Over the passing years
Young lady you've become
With loving ways and graceful curves
Glow upon your face
Time to think of future plans
For you alone to mold.

Grandsons

Mischievous smiles
Twinkling eyes
Wistful looks
Small faces

Little hands
Shuffling feet
Big hugs

Old Man

The old man with his weathered brow
Thinking of times gone by
Wasted youth and forgotten plans
These are things that consume him now

Body is bent and the soul is weak
Hands that are wrinkled and shaking
Eyes are dimmed with the passing of time
Oh! The years forgotten

Rick Smith

The Power of Writing

One-on-one, he is an effective communicator. But in a group, the reverse is usually true. Although he is a very good listener, when he talks many don't really listen, and some people cut him off in mid-sentence and tell their own story. He gets frustrated, and his pride is hurt. "Oh, what the hell, why bother trying?" he says to himself dejectedly, and he clams up. But, he really does want others to hear what he has to say!

One day he gets an opportunity to join a writing class at work. He has always been interested in writing, but had never done anything about it. Joining the large group, he begins to write; a small poem is created, stories are told about his younger days. What a difference! Now, when he "talks" to the group, the others not only pay attention to what he is saying and don't interrupt, but are truly interested.

He invites feedback about his writing. The others ask questions about parts not understood, and he receives helpful, positive suggestions for improvement, and encouragement and support to continue.

As his writing improves, his confidence grows. Can some measure of success in this medium help in other areas of life? Yes. He sees it beginning to happen. And he tells himself to keep trying to be more effective when talking in other groups. Meanwhile, he savours the sweet taste of the personal approval given to him as he talks through his writing.

He has found a powerful way in which to communicate, not only for relating tales about his youth, but also to express his hopes and dreams, his plans and ideas, and his joys and frustrations. **Oh, the power of writing!**

Eric

I have a cute, blond-haired grandson who is 17 months old and has my middle name, Eric. He was born in Ontario. At the tender age of three weeks he travelled across Canada to Coquitlam, riding with my wife and me in our motorhome; my son and daughter-in-law accompanied us by car and utility trailer. Eric is a smart little guy and he's also very stubborn; when he wants something he will not be distracted. My wife claims that he must not get his stubbornness from me because I still have mine.

I am installing a wall outlet behind my electric range when Eric and his parents drop by for a visit. Leaving my work, I talk with them for a while, then play with Eric and his Bert and Ernie dolls. Then, because I have to complete the range outlet job, I excuse myself and, leaving them in the living room, return to my work. A couple of minutes later, while I'm crouched behind the range with my toolbox and pouch of hand tools on the floor, I see a little hand beside me reaching for the tools.

Eric loves tools, especially Grandpa's screwdrivers. But, since I am now pushed for time, I have to concentrate on the wiring job. I try to keep him back by simply using my body to block his access to my tools, but he just keeps trying to squeeze past my arm, or between my arm and my side. The more I try to keep him back, the harder he tries to get through, giving little grunts with the effort; the strain shows on his face.

Suddenly he backs off, and I think, "Well, he's just going to watch." "No way!" I laugh out loud when I feel him trying to squeeze by me on my other side, grunting heavily. This kid never gives up! I pick him up and give him a big hug. But as soon as I relax my grip a little he lurches forward, almost falling from my arms, as he reaches out again for my tools. "I'm sorry, Eric," I say, "Back to Grandma you go." I feel terrible as I hear him crying brokenheartedly. He wants to help Grandpa! My work goes swiftly now: finish the wiring, turn on the breaker, plug in the range, try it out. It's okay! Putting my toolbox away, I put my pouch of hand tools in my den.

I retrieve Eric from my wife and head for the den. Now he can choose a tool from my pouch and, sure enough, he picks a screwdriver – the green one, his favourite. I watch his little hands turn the screwdriver as he tries to unscrew the handle off a desk drawer. "Next time, Eric," I promise him, "I'll teach you how to handle needle-nose pliers."

Rob Booth

WHMIS

Workplace:

I hear there's work going on in this place. Who ever spread that foul rumour is out of here.

Hazards:

Check out the hazards on the main floor Secretarial Pool. Whiplash and eye strain.

Material:

The "material" on the dietary wagons is very colourful; and take the '60s, groovy threads the patients are wearing. Some nice material there, too.

Information:

Have you ever wondered why staff get the information before supervisors?

A while back there was a demonstration, high speed buffing machine here for cleaners to try out. This was a very nice machine: lightweight, fold down handle, 2000 rpm vacuum for picking up dust off the pad. After about ten minutes of operation I was winging tiles off the floor at 2000 rpm. After pulling up the handle I saw a metal panel with "Operation Instructions". Before operating, read manual. I guess you have to buy the machine to get that manual.

Systems:

The institution here has miles and miles of different systems. Phone, water, heating, etc. Explanation of these systems is complicated, taking years of schooling to understand theory and practical applications. To me the bottom line is if one of these systems breaks down you're knee deep in "shit".

Work

Working in Valley View 300 Pavilion for about three and half years has been a gratifying experience. My housekeeping partner and I have been working on 4Y together since the first day that I started to work on that ward. For myself, I find a compatible partner is one that you say good morning to, then they go about their job, and you don't see them again until you say good-bye. This is basically the kind of working relationship my partner and I have: she will come by mid-week when I'm scrubbing or stripping a floor to see how things are going.

Scrubbing or stripping the wax off a floor has some rewards. Working with sealer and wax in a hallway all day, you're very lucky if you get four coats of wax down without some innocent person unwittingly walking past your "Keep Off, Wet Wax" signs. After thirteen years of doing this particular job, this experience is not quite so exasperating as it once was.

Changing fluorescent lights is always a challenging experience. There are your typical four foot, eight foot and "V" shaped tubes, which are all good and nice, but if you're on a ten foot ladder, halfway up a stairwell, looking down is no time to fear heights.

Of course every job has its pros and cons. This job for the most part is routine. You could set your watch as to where I am and what I am doing.

My personal point of view is that this job is a good job. A good job has good pay, benefits and hours of work. Nowadays, good jobs, like good partners, are hard to come by and are worth hanging on to.

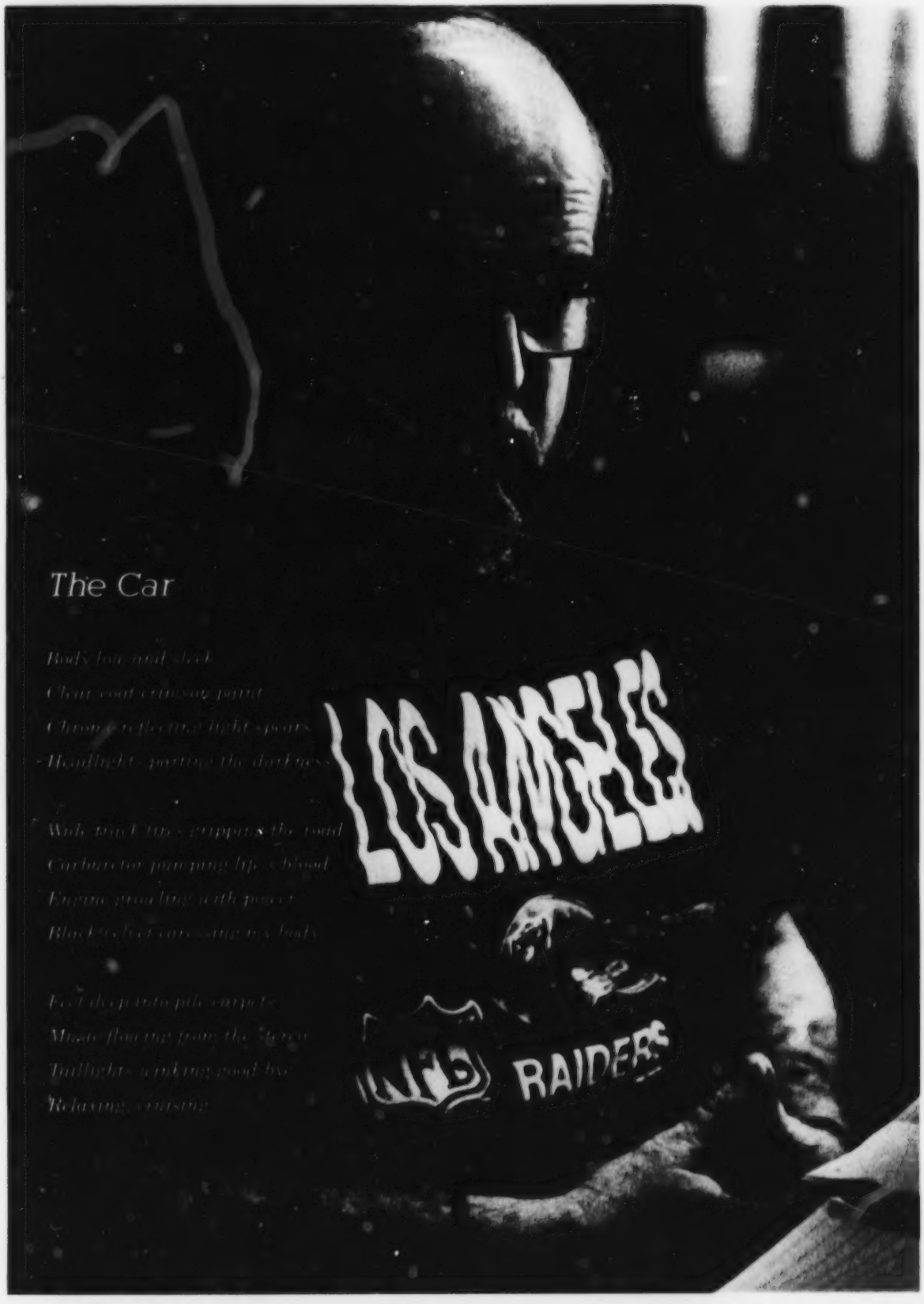
Morning

Buzz, the dreaded morning alarm clock; click, it's off. You roll out of bed; it's 5 o'clock, rain pounds down on the cement porch; out of the dark you stumble into the light of the living room. Your roommate's asleep on the couch, television left on, lights on, beer all over the coffee table. Off to the bathroom. Looking in the mirror I wonder, after thirteen years of this, will it ever get any easier to get up at 5 o'clock? Surely not. Then it's out to the kitchen to put the kettle on to make a cup of coffee. The wake up juice works every time.

Now, back to the front room, smoke, coffee, Lorne Green's "Wild Kingdom". The ritual is like a well greased machine starting up. It's quarter to six, time to go, rain gear on, rubber boots, gloves, ten speed all in motion, out to the street to meet the day. The rain is bouncing off the road, traffic is far off, the roads are quiet this time in the morning.

The rain is cold and stings as it hits your face waking you up to the fact that it's dark and cars driving by might not see you, so you're very aware of cars and buses going by. The highway looms in the distance; you're almost there. The traffic is heavy for a Tuesday, lots of water on the road, the cars and trucks spray you with water, almost knocking you over. But, twenty minutes from beginning your journey you're there at work. Another day has begun.

Ed Blakey



The Discovery

During the big *Red Scare* throughout the fifties, our ship was involved in the search for foreign subs on the Pacific coast. One of our duties was tracking down reported sub sightings. They usually came from some fishermen who more than likely had a few too many and spotting one of their discarded beer bottles thought it was a periscope.

Another duty was investigating any isolated inlet on the coast that was deep enough for a sub to enter submerged. After anchoring in a probable inlet, we sent ashore search parties. Their job was to look for any signs that humans had been there. If the area was sandy they shovelled the sand though screen, looking for objects like cigarette butts, match sticks and discarded foods.

At first most of the men ashore showed great enthusiasm, but after a few months it became a pain in the butt. To relieve this boredom, some of us came up with "The Discovery Plan". This consisted of the men going through their lockers looking for anything with foreign writing on it. We also found wooden veggie containers with Chinese writing on them. On some articles we burned the edges, on others we ripped small pieces off leaving just enough writing to make it look suspicious.

In phase two of the plan, the first group going ashore would bury the different pieces of evidence in selected places, then they would let the men going ashore the next day know where the pieces were hidden.

In phase three of our plan, one of the men would dig up a piece of the hidden evidence whenever an officer was near, then bursting with excitement, the officer would place the piece in a plastic bag along with information about where and when it was found.

To this day I am sure there are officers in Victoria still sorting through the huge piles of plastic bags.

The Postal System

Last October was my birthday. I usually receive cards from my mother and my wife's mother. Both are getting on in years and have a tendency to forget things, so not receiving a card from my mother-in-law was no surprise. Well, here it is three months later.

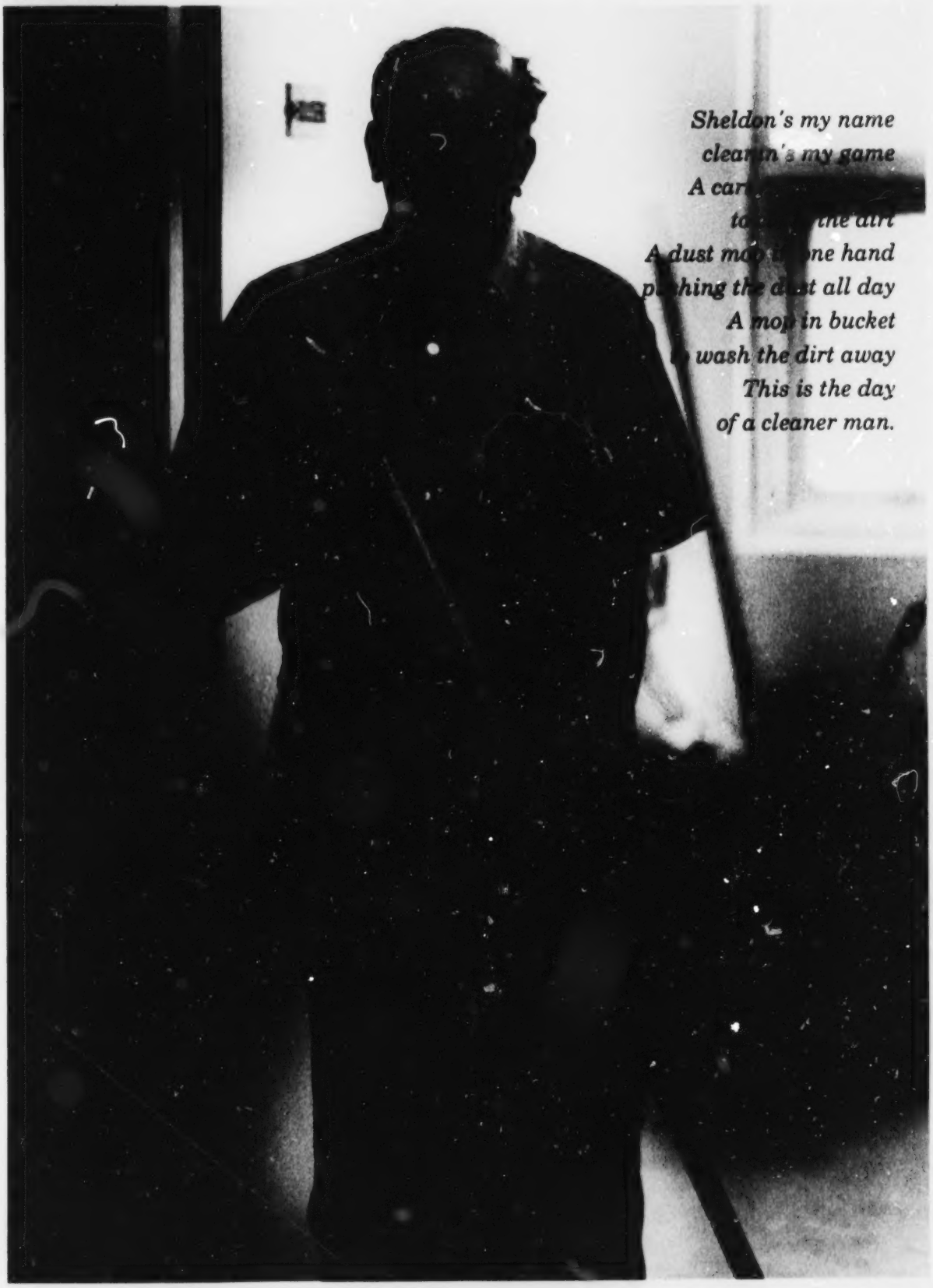
Last week at 6:45 a.m. I received a phone call from Canada Post in Toronto. The lady asked if I am Ed Blakey? To which I replied, "Yes." And do I live at 3350 Liverpool St., to which I said, "No, my address is 3356 Liverpool."

She told me she had a card that seemed to be from my mother, which she'd send out. Well, yesterday I received a large manilla envelope from Canada Post, containing a birthday card from my mother-in-law and also a money order for $8.55 from Canada Post.

This took awhile to figure out. What had happened was she had sent $10 cash, which was nice, but instead of the postal people sending the cash they bought a money order and charged me for it.

The crazy part of this is my mother-in-law lives in Coquitlam, approximately 12 miles from my house.

Sheldon Feldman



Sheldon's my name
clean[illegible]'s my game
A car[illegible]
to[illegible] the dirt
A dust mo[illegible]ne hand
pu[illegible]hing the d[illegible]t all day
A mop in bucket
to wash the dirt away
This is the day
of a cleaner man.

The Chocolate Pudding Cake Mix

Yesterday, after supper, I asked my wife if it would take long to make the pudding cake mix. She said, "About 10 minutes." Here I go, not being a great cook, I opened the box, and read the directions. There were two packages, one marked A and the other B. I got out the casserole and emptied package A. The recipe said add an egg and 30 ml of water. I got an egg, cracked it and added it with the mix, then I got the measuring cup, but it was not marked 30 ml on it, so I told my wife. She said, "Is there anything else marked on the box?" First I said no, then I found it said 2 tablespoons full of water. I added the water and started to mix it all together until the mix was smooth. The next step was package B. I opened it, and sprinkled it on top of the mix.

Then I had to add boiling water. Well, I did not want to continue this job, so I said to my wife that I needed boiling water. She was reading a newspaper. She looked up with a smile and said, "Do you have to be shown how to boil water." As you see I was to finish this recipe. So, I boiled the water and added 1 1/2 cups into the mix. I read the directions again and it said: bake for 25 to 30 min so, I mentioned it to my wife, and she answered, "Look at the recipe again." I found the microwave directions: cook on medium for 3 min, then turn the casserole, then put it on high power for 2-3 min. After aggravating my wife, the pudding cake was done in 20 minutes and it was very delicious.

Winter in Montreal

When I was a youngster, playing outside in Montreal in the winter time was lots of fun. I was dressed in a warm winter jacket and pants as well as a scarf and hat. I would play in the deep snow with my friends and we would build tunnels and throw snowballs at each other. I had a sleigh that we took turns pulling one another on.

I remember when they cleaned the sidewalks with a large wooden scoop which was pulled by a horse. A man followed. In one hand he had the horse's reins and with his other hand he would control the scoop handle. When the sidewalks were slippery two men with a horse and wagon loaded with sand would work their way down the street. One man would drive the wagon, the other would fill his shovel with sand and as he walked along the sidewalk he would flick the sand off his shovel with a stick.

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Ernie Kiniski

Knowledge and Wisdom

Years one through 12
I yearned to learn
So much I needed to know:
All things new
All things unsure;
I thought I knew,
What I did not know.

In my teen years
When I was sure of all,
It never occurred to me
That I might fall,
So sure was I
Of what I knew.
What point to listen?
I knew it all.

In my twenties,
What's left to learn?
Impressed was I
With all I knew; with
What they knew not.
My superiority
I tried to hide.
A clever guy was I.

In my thirties,
The beginning
Of wisdom.
I came to know
There's more to learn;
Aback for a moment
I pause to think –
No big deal –
This shouldn't take long.

In my forties,
My wisdom dawns
For now I know
In dark
I've been.
I know not now
What I don't know

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The New Manager

In my opinion, the role of a manager, in the workplace, as we know it today, will be greatly changed by the turn of the century. The new manager will have to be much more of a generalist than is currently the case. A holistic approach to the management function will become the norm. Managers will do much less supervising, disciplining, and directing. The typical manager will be a nurturer. Someone who creates an environment that sets the stage for success. Supporting individual work teams by removing pyramids and road blocks that crop up to hinder the teams' performances.

These work teams will be task specific and goal oriented. They will enjoy a high level of autonomy within their group, making most decisions that effect their group through group consensus. Routine management tasks such as disciplining, hiring, firing, and planning will be handled by the group itself.
Each group will be one of many other groups that form the company. Individual groups will routinely call on the resources of experts within the overall company to assist them in reaching their goals.

Because of the nurturing role the new manager will have to fill and the intuitive requirements of filling that role the inequality in the numbers of women in management roles will have reversed. Clinically speaking, women are, on the average, better at intuitive thinking, and without question superior in the nurturing role, to men.

Quite often nowadays the man in a relationship feels threatened by his mate who earns more money than he or who climbs the corporate ladder higher than he. The fragile male ego must become a thing of the past. Men will have to become supportive of their womens' career aspirations, and encourage them to achieve all that they can achieve. This supportive role has been played by women throughout recorded history for their men and now it falls on us, the men, to reciprocate.

So, it would seem to me that men can either be dragged screaming and thrashing into the 21st century or see the advantages of a new and more equal workplace.The smart man will seize the opportunity to work alongside women as equal partners in the future success of our species in an ever expanding universe.

Marg Luteyn

The Surprise

Last year was my mother's 70th birthday. My sister and I received a phone call from my younger brother who lives in Ontario. My brother said that he and my other two brothers were planning to fly out here to surprise my mom. It had been about 10 years since she had seen my three brothers. All the plans were in the making. My sister and I had to keep our mouths shut.

Finally, the day arrived when I had to drive to the airport to pick them up. I was nervous about this because of the heavy volume of traffic. Following my sister in her car, I was on her bumper and hanging onto the steering wheel so tightly.

We finally arrived at the airport, to my relief. But there were so many people around, we had trouble recognizing our brothers. However, my sister and I went searching. Suddenly my older brother came behind me. I was so happy to see him I hugged him, then I said, "Where have you been?" "In the lounge having a drink," he replied. So, my sister and I sat and had a drink and we did some reminiscing. My younger brother is scared of flying, so he had a few under his belt.

We had to get back to my sister's and plan the evening. Two of my brothers were tired so they went to bed. My sister and I prepared supper. In the meantime I gave my mom a phone call to say we would be at her place about 9 p.m. and would go to her favourite place, the Legion, where there is dancing and music. She did not know that all her friends would be there. We had decorated part of the hall with balloons and flowers.

My sister took my brothers to the Legion first. Then we picked my mom up, got to the Legion and got half way in when one of my brothers came out from the washroom. My mom was in shock – the look on her face! Then when the other two brothers came out she said, "Oh my God." We had to sit her down because we thought she would have a heart attack. Mom was so happy and surprised. We finally pulled it off and had a great evening.

My brothers were here for a week, so we planned activities for each day of their stay.

My Walk in the Sunshine

The weather has been unbelievable this week, so I thought I would take advantage of it while it lasts. I decided to go for a nice, long walk along the waterfront in New Westminster.

When I was walking I came to a sudden stop, looking across the mighty Fraser River. I had suddenly noticed heads of sea-lions popping up from the water, and what a sight to see them swim. I realized afterwards that sea-lions usually follow the fish up the river and enjoy a good feast.

Off on my merry walk I met all kinds of people. Some were taking dogs out for a walk and some people had walkmans with them. There were also joggers, bikers and roller-skaters. Young and old, holding hands or walking babies and toddlers in strollers combined to make a picture of very warm feelings. Besides, it was nice talking to various people.

When the sun comes out it gives everybody a good feeling. After that long walk I went for a "brew", then I took a glance around the upper deck where there were different types of stores selling: jewellery, paintings, fruit and pastries.

The waterfront is an area where business does well when tourist season arrives.

After that very pleasurable walk I returned home very relaxed.

Hans Wenger

Oh, but to
write –
freely, quickly
and precisely.

But most
write –
with fear,
with confusion
and slowly.

Oh, but to
write –
with happiness
and with joy.

But more
write –
in sorrow
and in pain.

Oh, but to
write –
Such a pleasure?

I want to write something different! Not work related, not in the first person. Maybe? Not even an essay or a short story.
Poetry, that's it! Why not? There is a poet in each of us. Is there one in me?

Much to say, can't find the words and when you do no one understands. Just like work – somewhat? So much to do, so little time and little appreciation, if any.
Like I said: I won't write about work, in the first person, I won't write but poetry.

Again – One

I am awake! Mind alert, wildly racing to put thoughts in order. Eyes scan the room and focus on the unfamiliar silhouettes cast about by the moon. I search for the digital display of the radio-alarm. It's only 3:20, damn, but I have to get going. I have a date with my mistress. The anticipation and the excitement has been mounting, since we last met, at times the craving being almost unbearable. What's it been – a week?

The bed stirs! Is she awake? In fear, I steal a quick glance across at Pat, only to find her fast asleep, laying on her stomach. Relieved, but guilty, I slither out of bed and quietly head for the bathroom.

A quick bath and a shave, pull on the jeans and my favorite white cotton shirt, can't forget the cologne. I detest body odor. I know that this is going to be another one of those long hot, hot days. I feel like such a snake. But I need her! Another cup of coffee, slip on the boots and then it's time to sneak quietly out the door, undetected.

Heart beating loudly, excitement building, I arrive at her door. I know that she is there waiting. She is as anxious as I am, for this long awaited moment. I insert my key and open the door slowly. A creak breaks the stillness of the early morning. I look around for any telltale sign of the neighbours being awake. It doesn't really matter. I walk in.

I see her in the shadows, her long, sleek and trim body, eagerly awaiting my caresses and weight upon her. We embrace, my thumb fondles that magic button. Quickly she erupts, violently shuddering and breaking the dawn with a low, throaty roar. I throw my leg over her body, the violent shudder subsides, becoming little more than a mild throb. The low throaty roar has quieted to a mellow purr.

Door still open, I clutch the handlebars and drive her out into the crisp morning air, heading for the open road, the sunshine and wind at our back.

We are again – one.

Janet Stevenson

Filling the Big Boy's Shoes

Well, this will be truly an experience for me, going back to the East Lawn Building and listening to each and everyone's ideas and plans to keep the building running on just that perfect note.

There are all kinds of people in this world with special needs and understanding. I find this will be quite a challenge for me, working with each and everyone of them. Furthermore, I feel as long as I have respect for all my staff, they will continue to show their respect towards me as their supervisor. I'm looking forward to a bright and exciting future in the East Lawn Building this year. I know I'll never fit into the Big Boy's shoes but I'll have fun trying.

Rainy Days

Oh, how I dislike dark, rainy days, when everything is soaking wet from the rain falling so heavily.

On rainy days when I come home from work I just like to curl up on the couch in front of a warm fire, sipping on a hot cup of coffee and relax for the rest of the afternoon. Now it's time to wake up and smell the coffee. With dinner to prepare, the dishwasher to empty, the table to set, so much for that relaxing afternoon in front of the fire. Maybe next time.

Caring People

Here I sit in language class wondering what I should write about today when suddenly two of our cleaners from Valley View, Ethel and Diane, came up to me and asked, "Are you still collecting those pop pull tabs for the purchase of a new kidney dialysis machine?" I looked at them in surprise and answered, "Yes," as they handed me a brown paper bag half full of pull tabs donated from the Valley View staff. I couldn't thank them enough for their extra effort. I asked some of my class members to take the time and give their opinions on the weight of this bag. I got all kinds of different weights from 2 lbs. 5 oz. to 3 lbs. 8 oz. It was all in fun but lets face it, if it wasn't for caring people like Diane and Ethel where would this world be? Our goal is 75 lbs. The man collecting the full amount is Ken Trouse, who is one of the managers from Dick's Lumber. All donations are well appreciated. Thanks again to all those caring people, from all the patients who need their kidney dialysis machines.

Bay Liner

Ed and I purchased an 18 ft. Bay Liner boat in the spring of 91. We decided to pull it to the interior with us on holidays.

We were all excited about taking the boat out on the lake, so when we found a nice campsite, we settled in for the night. The next morning we got up bright and early, hooked the boat back on to the van, and took off to the lake for our day trip to O.K. Falls.

It was a beautiful day to visit friends and we could not wait to get going. Ed took the boat down to the loading dock and launched the boat. We packed all our ski gear and set out for the day.

Ed decided we should get some gas before taking off so we drove over to the dock's gas station. While driving over to the dock, I noticed the back of the boat looked awfully wet so I just happened to mention to Ed, "Did you put the plug in the bottom of the boat." With a few choice words he replied, "No!" Fortunately we had great service at the gas station. There was a young man there who jumped into the water and screwed the plug back into the boat.

Here we go again! Ed took off from the dock, when all of a sudden a surge of water came up from the storage area and soaked all of us. Unfortunately, we had to bail for about a half hour. When we finally finished cleaning up, we had a fantastic time at O.K. Falls.

Keith McMitchell

The Rain

Listen
Can you hear it
Softly falling to earth
Little tears that bring life
That touch us all
Touch me and cleanse my soul

The Trip

As a child I always dreamed of playing pro hockey, never realizing that the dream may or could come true. Well, at the tender age of fourteen years I received a call from the Moose Jaw Canucks Hockey Club informing me that I was being invited to their training camp. "Ah, my first step to the NHL."

My father thought the idea was great, my mom thought differently; she was losing her baby to the cruel world of junior hockey. After a lot of discussions I was allowed to go, but there were conditions: my school had to continue, phone home twice a week and all the other motherly things.

I thought I was on top of the world until the train left the station. I thought, "how great" it was going to be. As mom and dad waved good-bye reality set in. "Hey kid, you're on your own, no more home cooking, laundry, borrowing a buck, but most of all the support and love from my family."

I was never so alone before. I was scared, so I sat by myself, afraid to speak to anybody, not knowing what to expect. I finally gathered up enough courage to go to the dining car for supper. I sat across from an old man and he asked me "Where are you going son?" I said, "To Moose Jaw." He then asked, "Why are you going to Moose Jaw?" Afraid, I said, "To play hockey." I ate my dinner and left. For the next 12 hours all I could think of was home.

The train pulled into the station in Moose Jaw and a man approached me, and asked my name. I replied and he gave his name and said, "I'm the trainer of the Canucks, welcome to Moose Jaw, how was your trip?" I said, "Great, no problem at all," never letting on I was scared shitless.

Memory of My Dad

A lifetime of memories
I have stored away
Not only pictures and papers
Together we went through some rough times
My heart bleeds for so many lost days
Although we found happy times
Each of us cared in our own special ways
Laughing never came easy
Nor did we always share our thoughts
You and I had a special bond
That I can't explain
I wish you peace, and no more pain
Sleep now my father
As your love carries on
You will always be in my memories
I love you, till we meet again

Your son, Keith

Dennis Zado

My First Experience

My first time, I'll never forget it. Upon completion of my basic training, to work as a cleaner, I was given a ward in the Crease Unit Bldg. Being classified as a cleaner II, one of my responsibilities was to maintain the floors. You know how it is when you start a new job, you say to yourself, "Self, we gotta do good here and make sure we do the job the right way and make a good impression."

Well things were going along pretty good. I was only a little bit behind schedule, but I was reassured that that was normal for a gov't worker. "Hey, right on," I said. "I am already starting to fit in."

Still, in the back of my mind I wanted to make up that time and be on schedule when my new supervisor came around to check on my progress. The fact that I was also on probation may have had some influence on this hasty decision.

While I was working, I kept seeing this elderly lady watching me. I had been told to be aware of the people and the situation around me and to expect the unexpected at all times. It felt like it was over 80 degrees in this building and here this gal is wearing a full length fur coat. It did strike me as odd, but hey, remembering where I was, I just continued on.

At one point, I recall, it was time to change the solution in my floor bucket. With sweat beads on my brow and occasionally dripping from my nose, out of my eye, again, I could see this elderly woman who was now standing four feet away from me, in the doorway, watching me, still in her fur coat. I smiled at her and then turned back to take care of business. My turning away from her appeared to be her cue. For at that same instant that I turned away, she lunged forward. Instinctively I turned to face my opponent, primed and ready for the onslaught. My training flashed through my mind — you are to only exert enough force to subdue the patient. "O.K. baby – let's have it," I said to myself.

Much to my relief, my elderly friend wasn't going to attack me at all. The mop that I placed against the wall was starting to slide down and she was only trying to catch it before it hit the floor. Low and behold, she did catch it. Lord knows she was quick enough and then handed it to me with a smile on her face. I thanked her; she said, "You're welcome," and left for her breakfast.

It must have been quite a sight, me standing there in the middle of the room, mop in hand, covered, now, in a cold sweat, with a glazed look on my face and quite possibly my pants being a little fuller than they should be. I know it was something I will never forget.

Someday

A mountain among men
Regardless of his size,
Strong and proud
Of all that he had.

Life was exciting:
And welcomed each day
Until his beloved
Passed away.

Night is day, day is night
Now time has no meaning
Aimlessly staring – a forlorn look
Covers this gaunt and frail little man.
Memories of a life
Once shared with his wife
Now slowly fading
Locked up inside.

Love that surrounds this little big man
Accepted, acknowledged – hard to say
The only love now is for his wife
Who he will meet again, meet – someday.

Carolynn Langdale

Typical Morning

My alarm clock goes off at exactly 6:30 a.m. In a state of bewilderment and confusion, I lean over to my side table and attempt to locate the snooze button to end that cold-blooded buzzing of the nagging alarm clock. Ahhh! another 5 minutes of blessed sleeeeeep. I drift slowly along on my snowy white cloud and gaze at the calm and gentle surroundings of the pale aqua sky. I am in absolute ecstasy. Rrrring!!! Oh God, there must be some mistake, it can't be – but, as I aimlessly try to assemble all my thoughts, I convince myself that indeed it is Wednesday morning and I must go through the ritual of abandoning my comfortable, secure haven to face another day.

I stumble into the bathroom, look into the mirror and notice a blurry eyed entity staring back at me. Slowly I turn around, gaze into the frigid shower stall and say to myself, "Carolynn, go for it."

The steamy water is beating against my sleepy body hollering at me to wake up. What a sensation. I'm awake. My dream world has come to an end and reality has set in.

I'm a Typist

I'm sitting, thinking about how my office enviromnent has changed from years ago. As I think back over time, I was sitting at a different desk in Aeore Unit. It was quite nice; I had my own office even though it was small.

But, there was always one thing I had to be aware of. Although I had nothing to do with the patients, the patients did not realize this and frankly I don't think they cared.

I remember the day, I had a visitor. Well, I'm not sure if you could really call him a "visitor". Here I am, dedicated as usual, working to accomplish all my daily tasks. Then my "visitor" strolls by. At first I didn't notice him. He was pacing back and forth. He was quiet at first, but as time went by, I couldn't help but notice that he seemed quite irritated. My first thought – where is the health care worker? Well, I'll just pretend my "visitor" is not there. I have lots of work to do. After a few minutes, I realized that it really was not possible to ignore my visitor. He was standing over my desk looking like a bomb ready to explode.

Trying not to look upset, or scared out of my mind, I asked him if I could help him. "I want in the gym", he said firmly. "Oh," I said, my voice cracking. "Is there no one to let you in?" He replied, "No and the door is locked." Trying to look calm I quietly informed him that I didn't have keys for the gym, but maybe he could find someone from Recreation Therapy who would let him in. He shouted, "I want in the gym, I want in now!!" I started to feel a cold sweat. This can't be happening. "Code Green" was all I was thinking about. Will I need to use it? Will I even be able to reach for the phone? While these thoughts were going through my head, he blurted out, "Look it here lady, let's have it out right now, and I can guarantee you one of us is going to end up on the bottom – and it ain't going to be me!"

I had to be cool. Calmly, I looked at him, and said, "Didn't you know, I'm not a fighter, I'm a typist?" After a few minutes of silence, he looked at me, my typewriter, then turned and walked away.

The Leprechaun

Mischievous little elf
Appearing out of nowhere
then vanishes at whim
bold and sassy
yet so delightful
lovable as can be

Treasures hidden
daring all to venture
into the secrets of his mind
charming and coy
and very clever
tricky as can be

A memory flows
through endless time
creeping into all our dreams
ever flirtatious
cheeky, cheeky
catch him if you can

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Bob Graham

Contemplations on a Winter's Evening

West
Black veins of leafless trees
Stark against the pallet of the evening sky.
Turning pink to orange to yellow,
Drawing the eye upward.
Pale, then electric blues,
Floating the sliver of the crescent moon
Cradling the universe.
The blackened blue apogee
Manifests the glitter of the first stars,
Inviting the relentless curiosity,
Inspiring the quest for knowledge
That elevates us above the beasts.
Where are we? What are we? Why are we?
The eye strains to pierce the veils of space
Which the intellect knows is infinite.
Out there lies the edge of the universe;
The beginning of time:
Concepts as elusive as last night's dreams.
And, we ask, what exists on the other side;
What existed before time began?

Gold Is Where You Find It

When I was about 13 years old, one hot August day, my friend Alan came by to ask if I wanted to go gold mining with him and his Dad. I jumped at the chance. In short order, I had my mom's permission and all my stuff ready to go: lunch, 22 rifle and bullets.

Now in the Yukon, a lot of people dabble in gold mining since there is quite a lot of the yellow metal around. Alan's father was one of these amateur prospectors. He was a big man, about 6 foot 6 but slim and quiet. This gentle giant worked all winter driving cat trains across the tundra resupplying the oil rigs. Because of this he always had his summers free for his hobby. The occasion for this trip was to try out a new portable dredge that he had just purchased. The dredge consisted of a gasoline powered pump mounted on a large rubber tube to which was attached a sluice box located on the discharge of the pump. A large suction hose was attached to the other end of the pump.

Now the idea was that the pump would float in the stream on its tube and the operator would vacuum sand and gravel from the bottom of the stream using the suction hose. The pump would then shoot the slurry over slats located on the bottom of the sluice box. The result was that all of the heavier stones, sand and, hopefully, gold would be trapped by the slats. When the slats filled up, the machine would be shut down and the trapped material dumped out for further processing. The further processing consisted of the time honoured art of gold panning.

Anyway, getting back to my story. Before we could leave, Alan decided that he didn't want to go after all. All my hopes were dashed as I had really wanted to go. But maybe there was a way. I went up to Alan's dad and asked him if I could go along even if Alan didn't. He was agreeable and soon we were on our way.

We were heading for Wolverine Creek, a small stream located just off the road between Johnston's Crossing, Yukon and Atlin, B.C. Johnston's Crossing is located about 100 miles south of Whitehorse and so we had about one hundred and fifty miles to travel. After finding the turn off and fording a large stream, we arrived at a small placer mining operation that belonged to a friend of Alan's dad who was willing to let him try out his new machine. Since I wasn't too interested in the whole process, I grabbed my lunch and my rifle and I was off.

As I said earlier, it was a hot August afternoon with a vivid blue sky and not a breath of wind. I strolled through the pine forest enjoying my communion with nature and picking off the occasional noisy squirel with my rifle. Ah, life was good. By now I had wandered a fair distance from the mine site and all evidence of man, both sight and sound, had diminished to nothing. I felt as if I was the first person to ever trod upon this ground. All this time I had been keeping in close proximity to the creek knowing that all I had to do was follow the creek back to the mine.

As I proceeded upstream, the country became more mountainous and I was forced onto the creek bed. At this time of the year, the creek only occupied a small portion of its bed and it was easy to walk without getting my feet wet. The further upstream I went the deeper the canyon became that had been created by the creek. Soon I was surrounded by steep walls of red rock that put me in their shadow. The canyon gradually became narrower and narrower until the sky had become a slit overhead. Upon rounding a corner, the canyon opened out into an amphitheatre accented by a small waterfall that tumbled from the rim down to the floor opposite to where I had entered. The water splashed into a deep circular pool about six feet across that it had gouged out over the millenniums. The whole waterfall and pool were illuminated by a single shaft of light that had found its way through a chink in the canyon wall.

I stood there mesmerized by the beauty. Fortunately, because I was alone, I could appreciate the scene for what it was and not give into the typical teenage boy's reaction that would have resulted if I had been there with my friends. I slowly advanced across the amphitheater to the edge of the pool where I gazed down into its fathomless depths. Again I had the feeling that I could be the first person ever to feast upon this marvel of nature. Slowly retreating from this spectacle, I took one last look before I turned the corner, forever freezing the image in my mind. This was my only visit to this place except, as here, when I journey in my mind.

Alex Morrison

Derek and the Monster Trucks

Ever since my five-year-old son Derek was two, he has been fascinated with old cars and trucks, especially monster trucks. The bigger the truck tires and the noisier the truck, the better he likes it. Last year I asked him if he wanted to go to the Truck and Tractor Pull when it came to B.C. Place. His answer was, "Oh boy, Yes!" After I had picked up the tickets, all he could think and talk about for the next two weeks was going to see the monster trucks with dad.

When the big night finally came we ate an early supper and left home around 4 p.m. The traffic on the Lougheed and the 401 was good until just west of the Cariboo entrance, when it came to a complete stop. After waiting for about five minutes the traffic started moving slowly, bumper to bumper, all the way to B.C. Place.

After 2 1/2 hours we finally arrived. It was about 6:50 p.m., the truck show was to start at 7:00 p.m.We had just enough time to park the car, walk and run (my son didn't do much running, he got carried) to the entrance and find our seats, which just happened to be at the other end from where we came in. Just after 7 we got seated; the show was just starting.

I had taken along some ear plugs, but he was going to be smart and didn't want any, that is until the first truck started with a loud roar. The noise was so loud he quickly asked for his ear plugs.

During the show the expression of joy on his little face was something I'll remember for a long time. His eyes were so large and his mouth was open with an ear to ear smile.

The show lasted until 11:00 p.m. and Derek stayed awake the whole time. He said he wasn't tired, even though his normal bed time was 8:30 on the weekend. After the show was over we joined the crowd in a rush to leave the building.

When we got to the parking lot I looked all over for my car. My car was gone! It's been stolen or towed! On the way to see the attendant to let him know my car was missing I remembered I had just bought a new car. For over half an hour I had been looking for my old one. I sure felt stupid and thankful I hadn't reached the attendant, so no one else knew what I had done.

Derek fell asleep just after getting into the car and slept until 11a.m. the next morning.

For the next few days he was bragging to everyone that would listen to him, and to some that wouldn't listen, about going to the monster truck show with dad. The feeling for me was just great.

Tracy's First Fish

When my daughter, Tracy, was six our family stayed in Okanagan Falls at one of the R.V. parks. I was always taking her fishing on the dock, or to the nearby old railroad bridge. The railroad no longer used the bridge, so it was safe to be on the tracks. We didn't catch anything in either place.

One day one of the neighbouring campers was taking his kids fishing and asked if Tracy wanted to go along. She did, so I gave her a fishing rod and some hard cheese for bait. After a while, I went to the bridge to see how everybody was making out. They had a few bites but nothing had been caught. Tracy suddenly called out that she had a fish! As she was reeling it up, I noticed it was a large Pike. She was so overjoyed she nearly dropped both the rod and the fish into the water. I had to grab the rod and help reel the fish up. All the kids were excited but not nearly as excited as Tracy.

When we weighed the fish back at the camp sight, it was a whole pound. I cleaned and filleted it – then onto the BBQ. When the fish was cooked, Tracy ate most of it for dinner. I only managed to get a small piece to taste. It wasn't bad. This was my first time having Pike. For a few days Tracy bragged to people about her fish, both because she caught one and because dad didn't.

Roy Biggs

My Pinball Machine

My wide ruled exercise book is open and the page is almost as blank as my mind. The page has lines. The problem, of course, isn't a blank mind but rather one that will not focus.

Thoughts resembling minute flashes of light are constantly streaking through this complex organ, my brain. These thoughts or ideas don't all go through, many of them seem to hit the wall rebounding back into play. Something like a pinball machine with all the balls in play at once, lights flashing, bells ringing. So many wonderful ideas. How come the little devils won't sit still long enough for me to put them down in my book?

Focus, or lack of it, is the answer to this question I've posed to myself. It seems that whilst these ideas are bounding and rebounding around in my head, I must focus on one and grab him, hypothetically speaking of course. Well, I reached out and grabbed. I think I missed.

Hot Tubs and Resentment

The resentment was mine, the hot tub idea, my wife's. Originally the "idea" was for a swimming pool until the formidable cost was transcribed into black and white onto an expense sheet.

Then, the "idea" of a fish pond. The garden manuals that we had been studying on this subject recommended a low lying area of one's garden. As our large backyard had just such an area the fish pond idea became a reality.
Next, the "hot tub" idea. Resentment rose like bile in my throat. The reason, I realized, was due to the fact that this project would seriously impede upon my leisure time. Being a shift worker with abnormal hours my leisure time is of great importance to my mental and physical health. So, a game of golf on my days off could be considered more of a stress relief exercise than enjoying myself. Living in an area with a climate that is conducive to this wonderful pastime of golf has made me an aficionado of same.

Is this selfish of me? Maybe. Well, pressure was applied as only a wife can apply it, and after a great deal of hard work e.g. electrical wiring, ground preparation etc, the area for the hot tub was ready. All this done, of course during my leisure time. So. . . resentment!
Then came the day of delivery, Hot Tub Saturday Morning (golf time). Her idea! Five friends to groan and grunt this five hundred pound "beast" into place. Wiring hooked up, tub filled, chemicals added as per instructions, and heater on. Eight hours until dip time. If there is one way to completely dissolve an awful feeling like resentment, I can without fear of contradicition thoroughly recommend a soak in a hot tub. That was a good idea of mine.

Hide-N'-Seek

"Come out, come out, wherever you are!" It was the standard opening gambit by the seekers. Nobody was fooled into revealing their hiding place by these loudly shouted pleas. The younger of the twenty or so kids in hiding would be shivering in a kind of delightful apprehension. I knew the feeling, having had it myself many times during these wild games of Hide-N'-Seek. I was a little older now and in my artfully concealed hiding place felt little danger in being discovered by this team of seekers.

The object of our game was to evade detection, if one was hiding, and to reach home base without being tagged. Home base being a lamp post designated prior to the start of the game. The taggers were chosen as undemocratically as possible and amidst the howls of derision and insults hurled at them, had to bow their heads and count to a hundred as the rest of us hurried away to hide.

The taggers were close. "We can see you!" they hollered. "You're gonna be caught you little creep," was another epithet yelled into the hedgerows to cull the gullible young ones into the open. I felt quite secure in my place of hiding, crouched low, behind some corrugated metal that had been discarded from a bomb shelter a few weeks earlier.

Suddenly a movement behind me. Bloody hell, I thought to myself. "Shhh, they'll hear you," said a husky feminine voice. Whoops, must have said it out loud. Somebody, a girl yet, had found my secret hiding place. My back was to the 'visitor' and there was no way I could turn my head to see her due to the very cramped conditions. She crept closer to me, slipping an arm around my waist, pressing her soft, girl's body into my unprotected back, whilst she softly whispered in my ear, "it's O.K., Roy, It's only me, Maggsie." I was in a state of shock. This bloody thirteen year old girl, a whole year and a half older than me, had found my hiding place and to add insult to injury was actually hugging me. In a choked voice I whispered, "How did you find this place?" "I followed you," she whispered back, her lips touching my ear. "Let go of me!" I managed to murmur in response. "No!" the defiant reply.

This situation was quickly getting out of control. Here I was, a girl hating, eleven and a bit year old boy being held under duress by this 'bloody girl'. Sinking into my confused brain was the fact that she certainly smelled a lot nicer than my younger brother, Ray. By this time her other arm had slipped around me virtually locking us together. I can honestly say, in looking back, that I had a flash of realization flood my pre-teenage mind. THIS is what all the older boys and girls had been DOING!!

Needless to say, my prejudices regarding girls evaporated overnight and along with my adult love of golf, Hide-N'-Seek holds a special place in my heart.

Steve Ketola

Language

Here is our language course: we are all assembled; what a great group.

This is my open letter to all my classmates to thank you all for your valuable input.

As our course draws to a close the various ideas concerning my writings have been appreciated. We are all able to develop a positive attitude towards the course itself and each other. The concept of team work and effort is highly focused in the classroom.

I personally have enjoyed seeing my writing develop. I am, however, finding it difficult to secure my co-workers to become involved in the language course. Unfortunately, the phrase we all at times appear to be afflicted with is, "I can't". It takes time and effort to convince individuals that they can. Their nervousness, like ours, will fade; they will enjoy the course and its learning possibilities: learning, in changing new ideas and growing. We have all been able to extract something valuable out of this course.

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Springtime

I think winter has gone now. This year we didn't get the snow (hope I'm not speaking too soon). The days have been nice: unseasonably nice weather, even with rain, the temperatures are mild.

Gardening is a great pastime of mine which will now reach its peak. Pruning, planting new bedding plants, raking last fall's leaves, I love this season. Gardening to me is a great escape.

The cost at one time was inexpensive. Today however, it's fairly expensive. There appears to be nurseries every few blocks.

I usually go to the annual home show for new ideas. This years event, I thought was good, with rockeries, yard ornaments such as wooden benches and gazebos. I am looking forward to another growing season.

Pride and Prejudice (Nice Title)

My wife and I attended the R.C.M.P. graduation ceremony in Regina, when my younger brother graduated. He is currently serving in Northern Alberta. During our visit to the academy we noticed the immense pride all recruits felt in the force and themselves.

The physical demands, as well as the intellectual ones were very demanding.

A recent article in the local paper about a new R.C.M.P. officer, who also happens to be a Sikh, attracted a lot of media attention. There have been other recruits from minority groups to join the force. However, they have conformed to the force. He was the first that special consideration was given to with a special issue turban made for him.

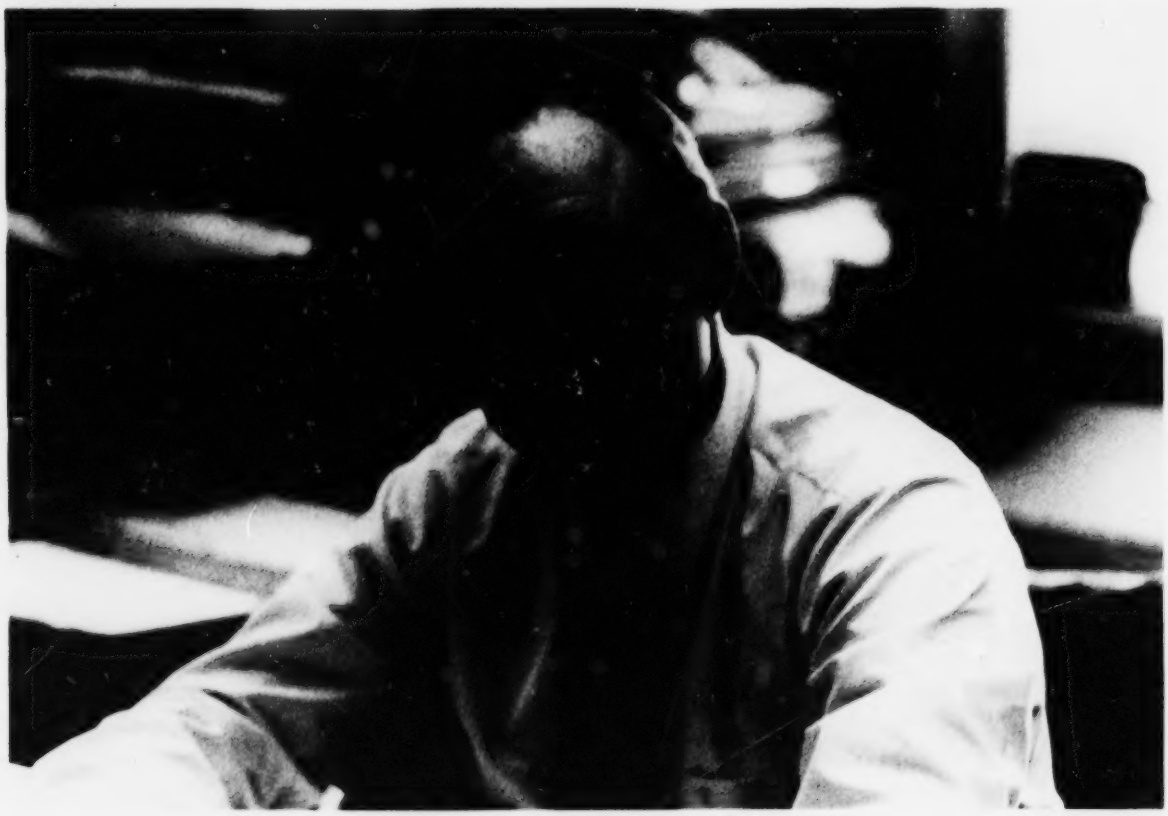
I was upset that prejudice was and is a real issue. Many people masked their prejudice and ignorance by saying they didn't want the traditional uniform changed.

Their view, like mine, when I think of the R.C.M.P., is in full ceremonial garb which included the red coat (serge) and the stetson. However, their normal uniform is no different than any other force, except with the yellow stripe on the pants.

Prejudice is a symptom of ignorance and ignorance breeds contempt.

Somehow, we all must change our learned behaviour and rethink our attitude of superiority. All people's cultures and beliefs are as important to us as our own.

Brian Puhl



Smoking

I smoke – I wish I didn't, but I do. I'm smoking now as I write.

I know all the consequences of continuing this unhealthy addiction to tobacco. It's very hard to forget them when, every day, you see or hear of someone becoming sick or dying from its effects. Even if I do survive this addiction, the other consequences are almost as unpleasant. I don't enjoy smelling like a smoke stack or waking up in the morning with smoker's breath. I also run the risk of alienating friends and co-workers who are forced to breath my smoke.

The drug nicotine is at least as addictive as many of the so called hard drugs such as Heroin. Once a person acquires the dependency to a drug, a heroic effort is required to rid themselves of this dependency. The recidivism rate for smokers trying to quit is very high, so it usually requires more than one honest effort to do so. There are many products on the market that claim to aid withdrawal from the drug, and some do, but the sincere desire to quit is the most important part of the process. Unless this desire is present, no aid will help.

I know many ex-smokers and I laud them for their perseverance and courage. I am also a little jealous of them because they succeeded while I still smoke. But when I gain the courage necessary to become another ex-smoker, I hope to join their ranks.

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Cross Border Christmas Shopping

Last Wednesday my wife and I drove to Bellingham, Washington to buy more Christmas gifts. Our first stop was at Fred Meyers, where we bought over $100 worth of computer games. Next we travelled to Bellis Fair, where we added another $200 worth of Christmas goodies to our collection. Our Christmas shopping completed for that day, we then decided to top off our trip with the usual Canadian shopping spree. Milk, butter and cheese were the main items purchased, to a total of $45. Gas was our final purchase. (You can't go down without buying gas.) After adding up all the items that we had bought, the sum arrived at was a total of $350.

My wife and I decided a couple of years ago that we would no longer attempt to bring anything back to Canada without declaring it.

When we arrived at the border crossing we were honest and forthright about what items we had purchased and the total value of these goods. Having done that we were told to go inside and fill out a declaration. The customs officer looked over our sheet and began to check through his computer and jot down numbers. Fearing the worst, I can remember thinking, "This is going to cost me a lot of money." Once finished totalling the duties owed, the inspector turned to me and said, "That'll be $32.14 sir, $8.12 duty and $24.02 G.S.T." I couldn't get my hand into my pocket fast enough.

Duty paid and told to "have a good day," we climbed into our car, looked at each other and smiled. My wife then said, "It sure feels good not having to lie, the $32 was well spent."

Funeral

When I die, I would like my friends and family to throw a party with the thousands of dollars normally wasted conducting a traditional funeral. During this party I hope they will share stories about the good times we had together and lies about the outrageous things we did. Liquor will flow until every last "partier" can drink no more. A four piece band will play songs by Smokey Robinson, The Supremes, The Righteous Brothers and other favourites until the sun comes up. The first song played will be my favourite, The Lady In Red, dedicated to my wife. The last song played will be Til We Meet Again.

I want my funeral to be a happy time because I know death is just another beginning. The beginning of everlasting peace and contentment.

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Spring – My Favourite Season

I wait in anticipation for the daffodil and tulip buds to emerge from the ground for in a few weeks the buds will be bursting into magnificient colours. After three to four months of dark and rain filled days, there is nothing more uplifting than to see the days growing much longer and the sun getting warmer.

Once again it's a new beginning. It's funny how people come to life on the first warm, sunny day. I see them in the parks practising for the first ball game of the year, or spending time in their yards preparing their gardens for the seeds they will be planting soon.

I have a small garden and I find it very relaxing puttering around in the ground on a beautiful spring day. When I look out of my window in March or April and see all the different colours in my garden I remember that they came from those seedlings I planted in the fall.

My Experience at Work

I worked for London Transport in England from 1963 to 1974, with the London Underground Subway. It was the largest company that I have worked for. At that time, there were about one hundred and twenty thousand employees. I worked as a guard and my job was to open and close the doors when the train stopped at the station. It could get very hectic in the peak hours, because you only had one and a half minutes at each station and two to three hundred passengers trying to get off and on. You could take up to three to four minutes.

My early shift started at 4:00 a.m. That meant that I would have to crawl out of bed about 3:00 a.m. to get to work by 4 a.m. There was one thing I was not looking forward to, having a suicide on my train because I knew that we usually had about six per year. Then, finally the day came. It was Christmas 1965, about 10:30 a.m.. When the train pulled into the station there were about eighty passengers on the platform.

When I heard screams I knew that a passenger had jumped in front of the train. When the train stopped we went to investigate and sure enough a passenger had jumped. We cleared the passengers off the platform and proceeded to get the passenger from under the train. It took us about ten minutes to get the body on the stretcher and take it back to the depot where the police did their investigation.

My Hike

One summer day I went hiking up a mountain. When I got to the top, the air was so clean I felt myself breathing much easier.

As I stood there looking around, I thought how peaceful it was, and considered myself very lucky to be able to see the beauty that nature had surrounded me with. I started to reflect on the environment and the effect that our industries are having on it.

It saddened me to think that if we continue to abuse our environment the beauty that was before my eyes would be gone.

I am grateful to be working for a company that is doing its part to protect our environment so that our children and grandchildren can experience clean air, clear rivers and fresh streams. But each and every one of us has to do our part before the next generation can enjoy a healthy environment.

John H. Isberg

My First Day at a Communication Enhancement Program

My Impressions – From John

John is an interesting fellow,
The course from him
Is easy to swallow.

He says the key is in my head,
The thoughts that come
Are to be said.

These thoughts we bring
From head to pen,
We share with pertinent women and men.

The most important thing that's done;
The chosen thoughts
Must please someone.

The Essence of Help in Regard to Communications

When I see negative corrections on my paper, it does not enhance my already poor opinion of my own writing.

In this situation, my first day at the program, everything becomes different and in another perspective. What I do right, is encouraged and this gives me a positive thought to build more and more constructive ideas upon.

My Impressions After John's Class

The English class is coming to a close.
John and friends had much to disclose.

The thoughts that come now to mind,
Flow to the pen with less of a bind.

Our writing were shared with other people,
This brings pleasure as high as a steeple.

The writing, I said, should please someone,
The talents I've learned aid in this fun.

If friends I've earned through lifting pen,
The greater are my virtues then.

For having strayed to so indulge,
The pen has lead me to divulge
My inner thoughts which aren't too much,

But big enough to earn, as such,
A friendship here and there along the way –
A thing for which we all must pray.
For isn't friendship our best asset,
A thing we're heard from many a prophet?

So here's to the class
We've done our best.
The future is where we do the rest.

If what we've learned today in school
Will help us teach the golden rule,
We've learned a gift so very precious:
Our written lines might be auspicious.

Who knows how seeds like this might grow?
We might contribute to life's big flow:
The flow that leads the world to better,
Evolution with less fetter.

If we can help the race improve,
There's nothing more.
We've made our move.

Co-operation and Consideration

Over coffee this morning, Bobby, my workmate, said, "Write about co-operation and consideration." "I'll try," I said.

So let's start with co-operation. The dictionary says something like this: two or more people working together for a common benefit. If one then looks up consideration one finds that careful and prolonged thought is involved.

Cooperation is how we deal with other people; consideration is how we feel about those people.
To acheive co-operation each or all of us must be ready to sacrifice our feelings or to compromise our ideas. In the end, the betterment of the group is kept prominent.

Groups also have to co-operate with other groups. For this I assume that the individuals within a group have to reach a common point of view in regard to their own feelings. They can then present these feelings to another group or groups. The continued arrangement of groups in this way, groups of groups etc. shows the complexity of world affairs.

The important thing in all this is that co-operation and consideration always reverts back to the individual.
Within all these groups every individual has to be willing to bend a little to achieve the common betterment.

How is this achieved? Look inside; do you co-operate with your inner feelings, that little something that tells us what is right or wrong? Have you cultivated these feelings to make them more dominant?

In consideration for other people, we must learn to act on what we feel is right for the betterment of ourselves and the other person, the group or the community. Why not? Give it a try!

Ethel Jones

The Rose

Soft as velvet beneath her fingers,
Vibrant colours beyond compare,
Scent so heavenly that still lingers,
Though fallen petals are all that are there.

Dewy and fresh only days ago,
Blooms drooping now in the sun,
Petals fall like drifting snow;
Alas — there remains but one

The tightly curled bud begins to unfold,
Promising new beauty, she knows:
To this loving gardener, precious as gold,
Her tenderly nurtured new rose.

Doing Nothing

"Fishing is the least objectionable way of doing nothing." This little gem of wisdom is something I heard on my car radio this morning as I was driving in to work.

That may be true for those of us who like to spend their valuable time in that fashion, but as I've never held a fishing rod and don't plan to, I have discovered many different ways of doing nothing.

When I owned a home with a substantial amount of yard, vegetable garden and lawn, there were many hours – nay many days when I would take a mug of coffee or tea outdoors and spend time sitting cross-legged on the grass, studying the lawn or the shrubs: maybe the flowerbeds.

Sometimes I would do these studies on my own; other times I had company. The day my son stopped by for a chat, we sipped a lager or two and spent the whole afternoon deciding that I didn't want a fish pond in the back yard. Then there were lots of days during good weather when the yard would be filled with people, kids and dogs, while everybody waited, doing nothing, for the coals on the barbecue to get hot.

These days, since I no longer have the house with the big yard, I find that looking at the kitchen wallpaper works. One of these days that ugly stuff has got to go. In the meantime that guy with the fishing rod has nothing on me when it comes to doing nothing.

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My Garden

Two months have sped by since I started my patio garden and yesterday, while I was out pulling up the patio shades, I noticed that everything is really doing well.

I must admit that I've been astonished and quite pleasantly surprised at my success with container gardening. When I planted those assorted bedding plants and vegetable seeds early in May, I didn't know quite what to expect. I'd been accustomed to spading up a big garden area, then working in the manure, raking and planting a more varied assortment of produce and flowers, so gardening in the limited space on my apartment patio was a new challenge.

Because the weather was unusually warm in May, the petunias and lobellia really got a good start. By mid-June they were blooming like mad, a riotous mixture of pink and red, the tiny flowers of trailing blue and purple lobellia, a beautiful contrast.

With the onset of the unseasonable hot weather in June, I became a bit concerned when the soil in the planters dried out so quickly. The geraniums started to look a bit sickly so on the advice of my mom, the gardening expert in our family, I started watering very early in the morning and adding fertilizer once a week. This treatment works extremely well; the pansies, especially, perked right up.

The vegetable planter is doing nicely. I took up my first crop of radishes last week and enjoyed their crisp, sharp flavour, along with some sweet leaf lettuce I'd harvested at the same time.

The tomato plants aren't doing well and it wasn't until last week that I suspected the reason. I had positioned the two planters at opposite ends of the patio, forgetting one of the most fundamental things in nature. After some re-arranging, the tomato plants are now side by side, and Mother Nature should do the rest. The greatest thing about having this patio garden is that it doesn't need a lot of care. In thirty minutes I can water my plants, pluck dead blossoms, harvest a crop, plant a few seeds, then just enjoy!

Sitting out there in my little garden, watching the sun go down through the bamboo shades gives me the sensation that I'm sitting in my own little tropical hut.

Dusty Graves

Home, Sweet Home

From the beginning of time it's been the foundation of the family unit: our greatest protector from the severe winter weather and heat from the sun. It keeps us comfortable from the cold wind and rain, a secure place to escape to when the pressures of life get you down.

This place is a place that once inside you're a free spirit. Home is where you always went for a cookie, a glass of milk and you were served breakfast, lunch and supper and it didn't cost you a dime.

The decorating helped shape your thoughts and feelings. The colours inside gave you your moods and the sound of voices formed your actions. It made you strong and gave you your confidence. A place where at meal time when the family all come together, a conversation was started.

A place that teaches responsibility without being embarrassed. Your development of behaviour and knowledge was created at home base.

Always remember a house is not a home, and a home is based on love and happiness, because what went into your community came out of a home.

Annual Softball Tournament, Williams Lake, Aug. 1991

The B.C.B.C. softball team, backed by general manager and head coach Ed Blakey, had become a strong team over the years in the softball league.
Ed Blakey as a coach was a fair person with everybody. It didn't matter how many team players showed up for the games you still got a chance to play. He didn't care if you were a strong player or a weak player, or if the team you were playing was winning or losing.

If you were five minutes late you couldn't play until the second half of the game, even if the team you were playing was the Brass Rail and they were beating the hell right out of you, no matter how good you were. And Ed was great at controlling moods. He never allowed negative attitudes.

Ed and Pat, the assistant manager, worked hard placing the men and women in their right positions on the team. The women were as good as the men at catching and hitting.

The first part of the 1991 season was going pretty good. We played every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. We made every game count, because we were gearing up for the baseball tournament in Williams Lake.

One week before the tournament Brian Puhl changed my work schedule which meant I couldn't go and was I disappointed. Other players on the team started making excuses why they couldn't go. Ed and Pat started getting nervous because in order to enter a tournament you must have so many women and men. So, Ed had a meeting with the team to see

who was going and who wasn't. Ed was one man short and time was running out. So, Ed asked Brian to change my schedule and Brian agreed.

That weekend we drove up, I took my Honda Civic Hatch Back. I made a stop in Hope to rest and carried on to Ashcroft for gas and a hamburger. Pulling out of Ashcroft I noticed that the car was over heating, but I just kept driving. I pulled over in 150 Mile House before completing my trip to Williams Lake, because the car was blowing oil. Just before Williams Lake I seized the motor. Thank God, Ed and Pat were at the motel when I phoned for a ride. After they picked me up I shook the whole thing off. I felt so good then, the car was the least of my worries.

Thank God, Ed and Pat were hungry because I was too, so off we went to Mr. Mike's Restaurant.

After we ate, we drove down to the ball park. It looked and felt great, with the sunshine and cool breeze blowing on our faces. After that it was back to the motel for a good night's sleep.

We woke up bright and early the next morning, and out we went with two hours before game time. The first team we played was the Prince George team. Everything they hit at us went right into our gloves; it was just like one, two, three, "you're out".

Once we got the bats going we put the game away early. We played well at the Williams Lake ball park. We played so well, I can't even explain it. We just killed them out there. With the bases loaded, Rob, our centrefielder, was driving in four runs at a time. We gave the same kicking to the Land Lords, Williams Lake and Kamloops teams.

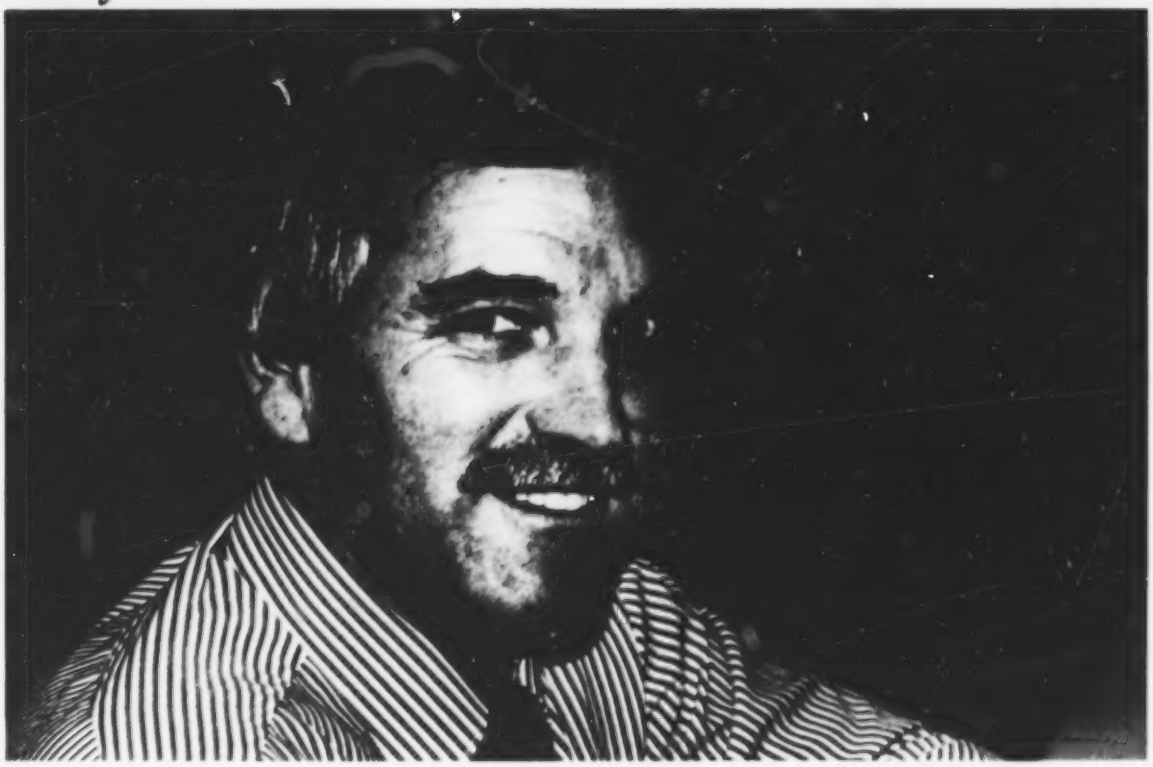
That evening the teams got together for a barbecue, and the food was great. We were all so tired we just sat and relaxed. The conversation that came up the most was about who would win the trophy tomorrow.

The morning came fast and we were looking at the final game. That afternoon our whole team was walking tall.

The team came to an end in 1992. The best coach in the league turned to another goal after that victory in Williams Lake – remodelling his house.

The regulars that played for the team will miss him for a long time to come: such greats as the like's of Clive Hudkins, Roy Riches, Keith McMitchell and Dusty Graves.

Ken Stacey



A Son to Keep You Young

Have you all seen a face with a toothy smile and deep dimples on each cheek? Not a chipmunk but a young boy of ten, full of life and a little bit of mischief and a lot of love. "Dad, when are we leaving?" pipes up my son, Justin. Off to the river to swim we venture out from our campsite down a logging road. The trees scratch each side of the camper as we approach the swimming hole. "When are we going to be there?" Another familiar kid quote emerges from the skinny specimen seated in the passenger seat.

Silence from the driver, me, as Justin knows what his answer is – "When we get there, son!"

We park and gather all water gear available, swimsuit, pins, inner tubes and masks and snorkles. Down the bank we go and join the activity of kids and for dad, 'bikinis'.

Paddling ahead, Justin yells, "A diving rock, Dad." I hollered, "Wait for me." "Be careful," as most dads would say.
Next moment as I paddle around the river bend, I yell, "Justin!" It was too late. He has parked the innertube and is in the descent, airbourne, diving from a fifteen foot rock cliff. Thirty seconds later he emerges from the depths, sputtering.
As all was safe he executed a beautiful dive and I, in a sigh of relief, was really asking myself, "Does Justin keep me young at heart or lead me to grey hair and early termination?"

Whale Watching

The morning after an overnight stay in the famous Tofino Swell Lodge saw a drizzling rain blanketing the Tofino inlet area. This did not dampen the spirits of the Victoria whale watching foursome trying to don enough wet gear to cover all appendages. When we were all adorned in wild colours of rain gear, all had to exit quickly to dissipate the heat buildup of long johns and rubber "sou"westers.

The captain, Rod Butz, prepared the 28 ft. lobster style powerboat for departure. As we walked the 'plank' or ramp to the dock this feeling of "typical West Coast weather" came to mind, but there was something about it that was beautiful, lush, fresh, and historical. This area is alive (rich) with native history: Meares Island across the harbour, beauty in the forests and water – eagles and gulls.

Captain Rod, a Seattle businessman, who fished this area every year for thirty years asked himself one day in his office, "What do I want from life? Stress of long hours of work or a small business in west coast Tofino to retire with?" Two months later Tofino Swell was his home. He is 75 years old and loving life. What a character. He said, "Don't wait for retirement to enjoy life, do it now!" He is!

The boat smoothly departed from the gas dock and skimmed over the calm waters of Tofino harbour in search for the big grey. The wake behind the boat opened up a silver ribbon as we passed Meares Indian reserve.

South of Vargas Island there was no sight of the big grey. Rod radioed the Tofino Mist (a crab boat troller) captain saying, "Hey Butch, any sight of the greys?" Butch replied, "Negative, he left early this morning."

We searched a little further and returned to the bay, north of Graveyard Island, where eagles nested in the top of an old tree.

Crab nets were baited and set, seven in a length of one half mile. Forty minutes later the boat was filled with excitement when we passed our friends, John and Colleen, a hook to gaff the line of the crab buoy. Engine off and net hooked, John hauled in hand over hand the crab net to the surface. John yelled, "Holy Cow," as I assisted the net lift into the boat.

They both have never 'crabbed' before. They were excited. There were fourteen crabs in one net. The next move was to remove them. With instruction from Rod. John caught on quickly but the crabs almost caught on to him – but no fingers lost. A dinner feast followed, after the crabs were cooked in a large pot over a propane burner. All were full of crab and butter, content to bed in early.

The following morning rain forced us to play tourist at John Henry Vickers and The Whale Gallery. In the gallery we all were astounded at the early 1900 pictures of whales directly in front of the government dock, cavorting only a hundred feet from shore, thinking this will never happen in the 1990s. As we walked for brunch at the Maquinna Hotel every one was yelling, "Whale in the harbour." Running down to the government dock, umbrellas flapping, we enjoyed the beauty of a forty foot grey jumping in the bay and heading toward the harbour exit.

Awesome! Incredible! Huge! Beautiful! – not enough words to describe a sight that we hope everyone may experience. "The beauty of nature."

Diane Teal

The Garden

It was April and I was looking out the window as I washed the sills of the dorms on Ward 3X. The grounds looked dead; there was no life in them. Then came May when the gardeners came out and started to work the soil. This hard, lumpy dirt was turned into beautiful black soil ready to put the plants into.

For mid-May the gardeners started to put the plants in, so now there was some colour to look at.

On June 3, Harold, one of the gardeners, was pruning the trees outside the building. By the time he was done, this tree, that looked all over-grown had a beautiful shape.

Now that the plants are in and the tree is shaped the grounds are very pretty to my eyes. When I feel a little down all I have to do is go to the windows and look out.

"Moolack Shores"

It was late last September when my husband and I were driving along the Oregon coast. There is a little town called Newport where we had decided to spend the night. While driving there we looked over the ocean and were just in awe of the beauty of the waves.

Arriving in Newport we started to look for a place to spend the night. We spotted a motel with the name "Moolack Shores"; this sounded interesting so we stopped and went in. They gave us a brochure and told us about the different rooms. My husband and I took one for the night. The room we got was the "Aviator's Room", in which there were parts of planes from the First and Second World Wars. There was also a picture of the Blue Angels, a team of well know aerobatic performers from the U.S.A., a pilot's scarf from the First World War, and pictures of pilots.

As I sat looking at all the nostalgia that surrounded me, I felt as if I was getting to know the feelings of the pilots and I wondered if the parts of the planes were parts of their planes. I have never felt that kind of feeling before.

At that time there were fourteen rooms, each one having a different theme: The Nautical Room, The Whaler, Camelot and The Hawaiian.

My husband and I will be going back this September to stay in the Art Gallery; we hope it will fulfil our expectations as did the Aviator's Room.

May 12, 1992

It is Tuesday afternoon, 2:30 p.m. I arrive home and run straight into the bathroom. I come out and turn on the T.V. to watch my soap opera. Sitting looking at the T.V., the phone rings. Don, my son, is on the other end, wishing me a happy birthday and telling me he has to go to work and won't see me. Don was to have the night off so this was going to be the first time he couldn't be with me on my birthday. It made me a little sad, but then I thought he has been with me for twenty birthdays and I can't complain. I thanked him for the call and he said, "See you tomorrow."

At 6:00 p.m. my husband, Bob, opens the door yelling, "Happy birthday, Diane." Then he goes to the phone and orders Chinese food for dinner. Dinner comes, we eat, then my daughter, Kelly, and Bob tell me to sit and they will clean up.

A while later I'm making a cup of tea and the door opens and in comes my mother-in-law, father-in-law, uncle-in-law, daughter-in-law and my husband's cousin from Victoria, all singing happy birthday and carrying a cake. I am surprised because I don't think anyone is coming, because it is a week night.

I open my cards and presents. Everything is lovely. Then I cut the cake and pour coffee and tea and we sit around talking until about 10:00-10:15 p.m. Then everyone went home.

As I sat on the bed getting ready to go to sleep I thanked the Lord for the family He had given me and how beautiful the day had been.

Rita Nanos

Winter Dance

This goes back to the sixties when we had one of our cold winters.

My husband and our neighbour were outside shovelling snow off the sidewalks. I had been inside cleaning house and when I took the garbage out the can was too full of frozen garbage so I jumped up to push it down.

The neighbour, seeing me jumping up and down on the can asked my husband, "What is she doing?" My husband, without a moment's hesitation quipped, "She's doing the Can, Can!"

A Lady of Great Fortitude

I met Anna back in the sixties when we both worked at Eaton's, in the kitchen, making fancy sandwiches and hors d'oeuvres for parties such as the Jerry Gossely Show. I greatly admired Anna because even though she had suffered great hardships she could always smile and have a kind word for everyone. Anna was a very gracious lady with beautiful silver hair that she always wore in a bun. She was born in the Ukraine and came to Canada after her husband had been killed in the war. She wanted to start a new life for herself and her young daughter. She said that they always saved their quarters and fifty cent pieces so they could go on holidays.

When her daughter got married and had her first baby, Anna was on Cloud 9. One weekend they all decided to go to Vancouver to visit some distant relatives. It was the weekend a Russian freighter and B.C. ferry collided at Active Pass. The daughter was below deck in their car feeding her baby. Both mother and child were killed. And even though Anna's life has been filled with so much tragedy, Anna can still smile.

An Old Fashioned Christmas

I remember the year I turned six, although it seems like yesterday, it is all so vivid in my mind. I can hear my mother saying, "Today my little *madchen* we will bake our Christmas cakes," and I would help her mix all the fruit in a huge earthen bowl while kneeling on a kitchen chair. I can still smell the tantalizing aroma of the cakes baking as it permeated the house. After we disposed of the dishes, she got out her sewing machine and started making handsome flannelette pyjamas for my six older brothers for their Christmas presents. She said it was our little secret and I walked around with a knowing and smug look on my face. My mother also managed to make us girls beautiful night gowns with crocheted lace on the sleeves and collar; she must have sown them after we were all in bed because I was very surprised when I got it.

As it got nearer to Christmas, my mother would bake several different types of cookies and bread. The house was cleaned from top to bottom and we would decorate every room. A week before Christmas my father would bring home a fir tree which was always a must. We would all help to decorate it and we put little candles in holders all over the tree. On Christmas Eve, before we all went to Midnight Mass, it was lighted and we would sit and sing Christmas carols. It is a memory I will never forget.

Then we would get all bundled up and in a sleigh with bells ringing on the horses we drove to church. The night being bright and clear, the snow glistened like diamonds.

Next day we were all up with the dawn because chores had to be done. After my mother had the goose and raisin dressing ready for the oven, we all went to church once more. After mass we would open our presents and I remember getting cut-out dolls and a colouring book with crayons that kept me busy for months. After dinner we would play with games, such as Snakes and Ladders; the older ones liked to play cards. In the evening my aunt and uncle, with their brood, would visit and there would be more feasting on cake, cookies and candies and nuts. While the children played, the adults would discuss politics and, yes, religion. It was a time when people truly believed that families that prayed together, stayed together.

Al Cruickshank

Decisions, Decisions

One Sunday, a large group of my friends went skiing at Hemlock Valley. Most of the group had learned to ski together, except for my young brother-in-law. He had only been skiing a year or two, and always at Grouse Mountain, on well groomed, open runs. Although there had been fresh snow during the week, the normal runs were all hard packed from the Saturday crowd, so we decided after a couple of runs to ski through the trees away from the crowds.

With my brother-in-law, Dennis, and I following, the group skied gently through the fresh snow, sometimes making one track, sometimes three or four tracks. Being at the back, we could pick the easiest route. In one small valley, part of the group went uphill of a large fir tree, and part went on the downhill side.

Dennis, who was not used to soft snow, was concerned with keeping his skis in the tracks and was not looking very far ahead. Where the tracks split, his left ski followed the uphill track and the right ski tracked downhill. Looking up, he saw the tree, and straightened up. He spread his arms, let out a yell, and smacked nose-first into the rough, cold bark. His yell, the sound of which stopped the leading group, sounded like *Whoa!* or maybe *Woe!*

After we peeled him from the tree and packed snow on his nose to stop the bleeding, Dennis followed an open run down to the lodge and spent the rest of the day there.

The only skiing he does now is on the water.

Little Racer

I saw the ad in the newspaper, and called right away. *Lola Race Car – $1,000 OBO.*

Assured it was a Lola sports racer, and given an address in Surrey, I was there within the hour. A pair of very scruffy gentlemen took me to the barn (a treasure house of weird old things) and pointed to a dirty little red car. After a quick check to see that it had four wheels and an engine, and a Lola identification plate, we commenced haggling.

After their reference to rich young fellows, and my complaints about the obviously derelict condition of the car, they agreed to take my $650, load the car on a trailer and follow me home.

I decided on the way home that it would be better if I cleaned this mess up before my wife saw it, so I led the way to my father's house with an enclosed garage. With my parents encouragement (you're crazy and how long is that junk

going to be here?) echoing around the neighbourhood, the car was unloaded, washed, and pushed temporarily into the garage.

The idea so excited my buddy, Dave, that he got an old Cooper Formula Junior from the display window of the "Black Sheep Boutique" in Gastown.

Getting this car on my trailer was easy, getting it out of the store was not. Four of us had to lift the car down from the window display, turn it on its side and slide it out the front door, roll it down the sidewalk and into an alley where the trailer waited. The Cooper resided in my carport alongside the Lola until his garage was built.

As we slowly rolled into the pit area, I could see the look of relief on my wife's face.

With a race car needing repairs I had to buy tools — lots of tools. I also had to buy parts, when I could find them, or even have them made. I kept an account of all money spent on the car itself and the numbers mounted quickly. My wife kept track of the time we spent on the car, and it was more time than I spent at work. It was mostly grunt work: cleaning, painting and polishing. The delicate bits, carburators, transmission and rear end were taken to the specialists. Wrapped in rags in a wicker basket, the rear end was greeted with laughter, and on inspection, agreement that it was indeed a "basket case", repairs luckily could be made.

With much help, the car was finally together the day before it was due to be inspected for driver training. I was going to be a race driver at the fine old age of 27. Well, try anyway. But in the process, I would have to abuse "Lola", risk destroying all I had built.

On the first day of driver training in April, the instructor I was assigned to refused to drive Lola. Another instructor had driven the car years before and agreed to swap students. He was very experienced so I was relaxed as he drove out on to the track for a few "slow" laps. His version of slow and mine were radically different.

He knew the car had raced at Westwood in 1965 and still held the class record. He also knew I would not let him use the car after driver training so. . . . Lola lasted all of two and a half laps, then the axles chewed into the new roll bar and the rear end of the car started wobbling. As we slowly rolled into the pit area, I could see the look of relief on my wife's face.

When Dave and I left to write our exam, my wife's expression changed as she was left by herself to load the broken car onto the trailer. I completed the training the next day using my new sedan and received a novice licence. Unfortunately, I also had a broken car to repair, because I had to run four novice races before the season ended in September or do driver training again next year.

With the help of a friendly machinist the axles were rebuilt and the car was ready to go racing again.

Niculae Vasilescu

Reflections

In the summer of 1972 I went from Denmark to Sweden, by train. I marvelled seeing the endless Swedish forests and countless lakes, gingerbread houses having bright, lively colours, nice gardens and flags on tall masts. After many hours I reached my destination, UPSALA – the city university. Literally it is a university the size of a city. Imagine U.B.C. a few times greater. Upsala is the second oldest university in the world (150). It looks like a medieval castle with huge red brick buildings and bridges. The inside walls are covered by huge bookshelves and big tapestries. In the 15th and 16th centuries Sweden was a big power and as a result of its conquests and plunders many treasures from the occupied territories ended up in Upsala.

The relaxed and friendly atmosphere pervades at any level. The apparent easy going impression is a contrast to the serious hard working attitude, a well known Swedish trademark.

How delighted I was to be with my friends in the middle of the elite of Upsala – few prominent leaders of the university. After many hours of sophisticated talk we took a bus to the outskirts of the city. Could you imagine my astonishment at seeing some people taking their dogs inside the bus and paying an extra ticket for each dog? Civilized, but still strange to my mind.

When we reached our destination, we got out of the bus, walked by a graveyard, which looked like a little park not a graveyard – no crosses, tombstones or flowers. I was stunned by this and strangely enough I thought of death. How sad to die here and be buried in this emptiness. How beautiful the old country graveyards were. What a contrast. I explained to my friends my thoughts. With nice, gentle words they explained to me how lonely they are, how sad and deep down they suffer in that civilized, clean and prosperous civilization. It was something new which I never thought about before and from then on I had to encounter more and more of the price paid for material prosperity.

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In the Fairytale Country

It happened in a railway station, in a foreign country where I had just arrived. I was waiting for a train to take me to an unknown place to meet a friend. There I recuperated my senses and noticed the surroundings and the people. It was so calm, clean and relaxing.

From the train I could see small picturesque, old, charming houses with lots of flowers and trees. It was like in a fairytale story.

My brain was suddenly bombarded by the sadness of being away — so far away from my country and my family and jealous of why here it is so nice and civilized, compared with the place where I came from. Why?

After a few stops the rail cars were transferred to a huge barge. I was amazed by the change. You see, I did not know that we were going to a big island. I marvelled at the scenery, at the unexpected change. When I reached the destination the first thing I was told was, "This is the place were Hans Christian Andersen was born."

It was Odense. I was in the fairyland of Denmark.

A Little Background

Until the 2nd World War my country, Romania, was a free, democratic kingdom and very rich. People from all over Europe came to do business or settle there. Romanians did not have to emigrate like other Europeans for economic reasons. The exception was in 1910 when many from the Austro-Hungarian empire had to emigrate due to a large famine. Mostly people came to Canada, all under the Austrian name.

I was telling you of the richness of my country. To form an image just imagine that Germany could not have started the 2nd World War without Romania's oil. Neutral Romania supplied both sides with materials and produce. Romania was like Portugal, neutral and prosperous. After the Stalin–Hitler agreement a third of Romania was 'given' to Russia by Germany as was the case with the Baltic states and half of Poland. Germany earlier 'gave' Transylvania to Hungary. Transylvania (over the forest – the Latin translation) was for a short period of time under Austro-Hungarian Europe, like Slovania and Croatia and parts of Poland. At the end of the war Romania was dragged into it and lost over 200,000 people, the 4th highest number of casualties. Despite promises to keep her neutrality, the allied powers 'gave' Romania to the Russians in exchange for Greece. Russia plundered East European countries.

In the last five years of despotic tyrannical "Communism" (fascism) people suffered tremendously: no milk, no heat, no warm water and by law every family had to have five children.

I mention this to you to make you realize how fortunate and spoiled you are in this blessed country – my new country, Canada.

Trevor Dewick

The Amateur Electrician

A few years ago my wife and I decided to do some renovations to the dining area and the kitchen. She has the ideas and I do the work.

One part of the work involved extending a wall, installing a light with a fan and running new wiring for a switch and a duplex outlet. The wall extension went without a hitch and I installed the new light, fan, switch and outlet. Even the new wiring was no problem.
I should explain, I am not really an electrician.

After making the connections to the various electrical 'demons' and with my wife and family looking on, I flipped on the breaker. There was a flash of blue and . . . nothing. "No problem," I said. "Obviously the wires are wrong." So, with the breaker still off, I changed the wires around. Flipped the breaker again – same blue flash.

My wife is now starting to say things like: "I don't think you know what you're doing and we should get Gunnar." (Gunnar of course being an electrician.) However, I decided to change the wiring combinations again. Trying to impress wife and family, I said, "Obviously neutral should be here. Red on this one. Black here. That should do it." On with the breaker, same blue flash!

By now, my credibility is pretty low. My wife goes to the living room to phone Gunnar. She comes back to the dining room to announce, "He will be here in about an hour. He will know which wire goes where." "Oh well," I said. "At least I should get the vacuum and clean up." Still trying to rescue some of my lost credibility, I plugged it into the new outlet and switched on the vacuum. I was surprised that the light came on and the fan worked but not the vacuum.
My wife, by that time, was hysterical with laughter. Fortunately, Gunnar arrived shortly after and put things right.

A Day on Vacation

This is our third day, again warm and sunny but then it always is in Las Vegas.

After making tea and doing a little relaxed reading my wife and I went down to the restaurant for a late breakfast. That's the great part about holidays, one doesn't have to get up and rush around in the morning.

After our leisurely breakfast my wife encouraged me to go and play a game of cards as previously, the odd occasion that I have played during the day has usually been profitable, and this proved to be no exception.

An hour later I met her at poolside having won $150.00 at Blackjack.
We swam and read by the pool for about 4 hours, returned to our room, showered, dressed and took in the breathtaking distant view: mountains turning a purple hue with the setting sun, miles of lights twinkling like stars in the night, the aqua green of Caesars Palace, burnished copper of The Mirage, blue/purple of The Stardust hotel casting a glow against a deepening blue sky as night came over Las Vegas.

We strolled over to the Flamingo Hilton where we had a 7:30 dinner reservation at the Beef Baron restaurant. What a civilized way to live, the most exertion is deciding where to dine in the evening. Unfortunately on this occasion neither the meal nor the service was great, it felt like eating in an elegant McDonalds.

A lot of people were out this evening. We walked over to Ceasars Palace where it was quite busy so we left after about an hour and wondered down the 'strip' a ways, and finally returned to Baliy's Grand Hotel where after playing cards I came away up $10.00. Oh well! better than losing.

Retired at 12:45 a.m.

Barb Rennie

The Seagull

About ten years ago I decided I was not going to work for the summer. All six kids were at home and I thought it would be nice to spend time with them.

Well, I'll tell you, after a month of being chained to the kitchen (at least that's how it felt), my temper was wearing very thin.

Lanny, at this time, was about five years old. He must have been in a growing spurt because it seemed all he wanted to do was eat.

This particular day he must have been ravenous. He ate with the older girls at 9:30 then again at 11:00. I was standing in the kitchen at a quarter to twelve and he was squawking about being hungry again.

Well, that was the last straw, I lost it. I said, "All you do is eat, shit and squawk – just like a seagull."

I guess he thought it was a multiple choice question, because he said, "I'll eat." So much for being mad. I cracked right up. Poor Lanny, he just stood there looking totally lost, wondering "what's so funny?"

A Mother's Day We'll Never Forget

It was Mother's Day 1982. Larry and I had made arrangements to take his mother out to brunch at Cloud Nine, and my mother to supper at the Lighthouse. We arrived at his mom's at 10:30 (our reservations were for 11:00). June and Ian, friends of the family, were already there.

Mom's apartment was ground level so, we parked in the back lane and hopped over the balcony. June and Ian had parked out front.

We started talking and time seemed to just skip by. It was getting late and we had to put a hustle on. We all took off in a rush.

Finally, we found parking and went up the elevator to the revolving restaurant. When we stepped off, June and Ian were already there.

We looked at them; they looked at us and we all said, "Where's Mom?" Larry said, "Quit joking around. Where is she?" "We haven't got her, we thought she was with you." Then the bomb dropped. We had all left her behind.

Taking the chicken position June and I said, "You two can go get her; we'll wait here!"

Twenty minutes later they were back. Mom apparently went to the back door, but we had left and by the time she got to the front June and Ian had gone too. So, she got herself a chair and sat on the balcony, 'WAITING'. Her neighbour came by and said, "I thought you were going out for Mother's Day?" She said, "Oh, yes, but they left me behind. I figure they'll be back in about another five minutes." She was right. Red faced and apologetic, they arrived.

That's definitely one Mother's Day we'll never forget.

Show and Tell

When my twins, Sherry and Terry, were in kindergarten they had one day a week where they would bring an article in and tell a little story about it. This day was called Show and Tell.

The girls were always excited about that day for they were very competitive and wanted to out do everyone else in their class.

This particular day after school, the girls came home with an envelope from the teacher. Inside the envelope was a dial pack of birth control pills and this note:

Dear Mrs. Rennie,

Your daughters have very ingenious imaginations, for when they held up the dial pack, they proclaimed that if their mother didn't take one of these pills every day she would blow up and die. So these pills keep their mother alive and happy.

Enclosed please find your life sustaining pills.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Young

Faiz Mohammed

A Life Is a Cafeteria

I read in a magazine that a visitor to New York City from another country went into a cafeteria. He sat down at an empty table and waited for someone to take his order. Of course, no one ever did. Finally, a man came with a tray full of food and sat down opposite him and told him how things worked. He said, "Start at one end and just go along and pick out what you want. At the other end they will tell you how much you owe."

The visitor did exactly what the person told him. He soon learned how things worked in New York City. He wrote back home to his friend telling him how things worked at his end. He said, "Life is a cafeteria here. You can get anything you want as long as you are willing to pay the price — you can even get success. But you will never get it if you wait for someone to bring it to you. You have to get up and get it yourself."

The important message that I get here is to be successful in life is to get up and get it yourself. Success is not limited to any one area of our lives. It exists in all facets of our relationships: as parent, wife or husband, citizen, neighbour, worker, employer, and all of the others. Success is not arriving at the tip of the mountain as a final destination, but is a continuing upward progression. Success is discovering our best talents, skills and abilities and applying them where they will most effectively contribute.

When my family moved to Vancouver in 1969, I found it hard to find a job in my chosen field. It was difficult for us to come from a different culture, stand in line like in a cafeteria, and help ourselves. I secured a job as a cleaner and at the same time registered for an accounting course. After completing the course, I found two part-time jobs as a bookkeeper. I not only earned my living but contributed my talents free to one of the non-profit societies accounting functions.

My wife had no work experiences. However, she possessed grade 10 education from back home. She found a job as a cleaner at one of the Ministry of Health hospitals where she worked for five years, unhappily. Later, through Canada Manpower, she completed grade 12. She found some subjects hard but it was her determination and interest that pushed her to complete the course. Soon after completing it she was offered an office assistance job at the Ministry of Social Service in Vancouver. She still holds that position, happily.

Knowledge

Knowledge is what one knows and understands, whether it is gained from books and teachers or by personal experience and observation. I think knowledge is very important to everyone, be it a man or a woman, and it is equally important to individuals of all ages. In my opinion people who accumulate a good deal of knowledge are looked upon with respect, and they are generally placed on a higher level than those who have neglected education. Knowledge will help to open the door to success and pave the way for a better future.

There is a saying, "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." I believe this is a true saying. We need to learn all through our lives. It is important that we try to put our knowledge into practice and best of all, we should try to teach it to others.

The Supervisors News Bulletin stated in one of it issues that anyone who stops learning is old, whether this happens at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young, but becomes constantly more valuable, regardless of their physical ability.

Once, someone asked Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was one of the greatest novel writers during his time, "What is your knowledge?" He gave a remarkable reply that everyone should stop and think about. He described his knowledge by giving an example of a caveman picking up a few pebbles on the sea shore. He said, "There are many more to be picked."

It is important that we try to learn something new each year. I started my employment in 1972 with the Department of Public Works and I had the intention of completing executive housekeeping courses. I registered with B.C.I.T. and completed a number of courses during the term of my employment. Last year I took inventory of my achievements and discovered that only five subjects remained to be completed in the certificate course. It had given me encouragement and a sense of feeling proud for being nearer to completion. This year I have registered for another subject which seems hard to me, but I am determined to complete it.

If we look back to our achievements we will be surprised to note the amount of knowledge that we have accumulated. In my opinion, we should have a strong will power and determination to seek knowledge. However, we are victims of procrastination. It is very common for us to say, "I don't have time."

God has done justice by giving individuals equal time and it is a matter of how we utilize it.

Libby McAusland

Lunch

Does my mother fail to have an imagination! How can anyone never miss a day of sending peanut butter sandwiches for lunch. I whistled for my horse as I waited for the school bus. On cue he arrived at the corner of the railed fence, softly nickering, to announce his arrival. As I reached over to pat him gently on the neck he reached over and quietly nibbled at my lunch bag. Could it be possible that he wanted my lunch? Well, I knew I didn't want it, so I took it out and gave it to him. Sure enough he ate the snack and also gave a performance. The harder he licked the roof of his mouth, the further his neck would stretch. By the time he had finished, it was hard to tell which he bore more of a resemblance to, a horse or a giraffe.

Why Am I Here?

As a person continually challenging myself to achieve a high standard and working on self-improvement, I finally admitted to myself it was time to work on my literary skills. I'm not placing blame, only stating a fact. In the school system I was educated in, phonics was considered unimportant and was left out of the program. As the years pass by I've watched many of those in the same boat I'm in.

My punctuation is okay (not great) but my spelling and sentence structure are appalling. Many times I have considered just getting that grade three phonics book I should have had years ago and just doing it to see if I would be able to achieve what I expect of myself. I admire the people who have a material ability or have taken advantage of the tools in front of them to have an even balance of all communication skills.

I know at some point in time I, too, will possess these skills. How long it will take is mainly up to me. I feel the first while I will be exploring my weaknesses. Finding new solutions to strengthen these weaknesses will be a challenge. But this challenge is small compared to the one of admitting my problem, that it was not going to go away on its own.

Just Natural

I arose earlier than usual on Saturday morning, but it wasn't that big of a deal. I began my day's chores. I had my breakfast and checked which summer programs my youngest son wanted to be enrolled in.

Off to the community centre I headed to beat the mad rush of other parents on the same mission. After taking an hour and a half to finalize the task, I proceeded out the side door with no real destination in mind. My thoughts quickly wandered to my son and I playing squash the night before. We didn't actually play the game as neither of us knew the rules. Suddenly I recalled the library was just down the road. What better place to find the rules for squash but in a book at the library.

Walking through the door of the library proved to be just as easy as getting a library card. That is where "easy" becomes a challenge. It had been well over ten years since I had been in a library. Oh, oh, oh what a feeling, as I walked past the walls of books looking for the sports section. To my surprise I couldn't find that section. I would have to find those tin filing cabinets containing the information on all the books. To my surprise there were no tin files. There never used to be computers in libraries. I just had to check it out: to my surprise all my questions were on the screen. As I gave myself moral support in the operation of computers, I started commanding the keys. In very little time I had the book I wanted and its location. As I took it to the checkout, I passed the romance section. Just as I stopped, I knew this was to be another first. Sure enough a book caught my eye. With books in hand I went to the check out counter. As the librarian scanned my chosen books I considered how much the library had changed since my last visit.

As my weekend ended, so had the pages of my first romance novel: I would definitely read another novel of that kind.

As I reflected again, I realized that I had changed as much as the library. No longer did I fear the entry to the library but I actually looked forward to the enjoyment it contained! At the start of language skills the confidence was not there to accomplish this. Now it's just natural.

Stan Roga

Fire Flies

In my youth, many years ago, many interesting events happened to me. But the one that I remember best is going to the town movie on Saturday night in a small town in Northern Manitoba. This was a great event: spending my vacation on my uncle's farm and helping my cousin with his chores was rewarded by going to a movie on Saturday night. Getting there and home was by 'shanks mare'. My cousin suggested taking an established path for a short cut. I agreed. Being from the city, going to town, walking the path, through the fields and through the bushes was a new adventure to me.

We soon arrived in town and went directly to the movie house. The movie was over after midnight. Now came the long walk home. We decided to walk the highway and then take the section road home. I remember the night being very cloudy and partially moon lit as we walked down the road. This was a longer way home than the path to town. After walking for a while on the section road, with dark bushes on both sides, I noticed a light ahead on the road, but was never able to catch up to it. It gave me an eerie feeling. I did not want to ask my cousin, "What could this light be ahead of us?" I knew he must have seen this light also and said nothing. I stayed silent for a few miles, but curiosity got the best of me. I asked him about that light ahead of us on the road, which we could never catch up to. He replied that he didn't know what the light was from. This bothered me; walking on the darkened road and not knowing what this mysterious light was. I asked my cousin again. He finally admitted he knew the source of the light and told me the light originated from fire flies flying in clusters. His explanation soon put me at ease.

Reading many books later about different countries there was mention of fire flies used in lanterns.

Years later when my cousin and I met he mentioned my fear of the unknown light on the dark road going home from a movie in Northern Manitoba.

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"O Eu-hoo"

Nearly seven years ago my place of employment was in North Lawn. The building holds many memories for me. My memories include the staff of various departments and patients.

On completion of my work shift, which was at fourteen hundred hours, I would wait for my ride home, which would pick me up at fifteen hundred hours. To while away the time I would read a book or sometimes pick blackberries which grew at the back of North Lawn, picking enough blackberries to make a fresh berry dessert. Picking blackberries on this particular afternoon at the back of North Lawn, I heard a soft voice, with a beckoning call "O Eu hoo".

Being inquisitive as to where this call came from, I turned around looking for its source. When I couldn't find its source I went back to picking berries. Immediately I heard the same call, "Oh Eu hoo". I again turned my head looking for the source of the call – no luck. I went back to picking berries. I continued picking blackberries until I heard the call again, and turned around hoping to find its source.

This time I sighted someone in the ladies change room waving frantically from the window to get my attention. I waved back at her to indicate she had my attention and went over to the window. I was informed that she had locked her duty keys in her locker and could not unlock the exit door without them. Being a gentleman I unlocked the door. The nurse came out from the change room with a sheepish grin on her face. The lady is a particularly soft spoken person and to loudly hail for attention required a great effort from her. But she was ecstatic to see me picking berries out back. Now, she had to break into her locker to retrieve her duty keys before reporting to work.

Cliff Otway

Father Looking Silly

One sunny, Sunday afternoon, Helen's mother and sister came to our farm in Surrey. Grandmother, sister-in-law, Helen, our 4 children and our 3 foster children were standing on the porch looking over the corral.

I went to the barn and saddled the horse. I rode the horse into the corral. I was wearing large rubber boots, so my feet were not in the stirrups. I was also wearing shorts and a white Stetson hat. Because it had rained in the morning the corral was wet. As I came into the corral and headed towards the house, the horse knew I was loose in the saddle, so he made a sharp left turn. I reached for the saddle horn, when I realized I was no longer in the saddle but flying through the air. I hit the ground and slid through the mud.

Our 8 year old son came into the corral and said, "That's O.K. Dad, I will get the horse." All on the porch had a good laugh. They still bug me about the incident of 20 years ago.

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Helen and Cliff's Experiences

My wife, Helen, and I have been married for 34 years, have 4 children, 3 girls, 1 boy and have 7 grandchildren. We have had 102 foster children. We have a 17 year old foster daughter that is disabled and in a wheelchair. She has been with us for 16 years.

One foster person, Mathew, has been with us for 22 years. He is on his way back from Mexico, where he went, on his motorcycle, for a holiday. He phoned last night to say he was in Arizona, working for a landscape company, as he ran out of money. He will be home in the middle of May, then he will go up to Prince Rupert to spend the summer on the fish boats. One year when he came back down in October he brought some frozen fish, but he did not clean them. Boy, did they stink when they were thawed. He never did that again.

We will be getting our 3 grandchildren for the long weekend, May 16, 1992, as their parents are working at the Cloverdale Rodeo all weekend. The following week we will be getting our youngest grandchild, Ms. Brittney (3 years old), Grandma's pet. She likes to go to McDonald's for french fries. She also likes to ride on Jamie's power wheelchair. She has her pet teddy bear.

The last time she was over she left Teddy in the van and when she and her mom got to the airport they had security looking for her Teddy. Her mom phoned when they got home in Richmond to see if we had Teddy. We said Teddy needed a holiday and was staying with Jamie for a couple of days. So Grandpa took Teddy and she came back over the next weekend.

Last week we had to go to Maple Ridge as Helen's brother passed away from cancer. We were concerned about her mother as she is in her 80s and not feeling well. The week was very stressful. It was a good thing the weather was good because there were about 500 people at the reception and later at their house. But back to work on Monday to the pile of paper sitting on my desk.

The Safety and Environmental job in P.M.U. 2 has become a full-time job. Something new every day. From I.A.Q. (Indoor Air Quality), to chemicals, bugs, contaminated materials, to people tripping or falling in the buildings on the properties. Tomorrow I will have a "How's It Going?" with the Property Manager. This will give me the opportunity to push for re-classification from Project Superintendent to Environmental Superintendent.

Anica Yelovatz

I Am Anica Yelovatz

I am married and I have two boys. I am working and I am very busy. We have a house to clean and a big yard to look after. I don't have any time for writing or reading, so, you have to excuse me for my bad writing. But my reading is a little bit better. I am expecting to improve with good teachers and nice people around me. I am very happy to be here.

Thank you very much for helping me. On the first page I told you what I don't know. On this page I am telling you what I am good at. I am a good mother, and I am a good cook and good cleaner.

My Garden

I want to tell you that I love to work on a garden. I love it so much that I don't need to eat or drink while I'm working in my garden. I love trimming trees, making them different shapes. I love to design my garden. I love to plant and transplant flowers, cut hedges and cut the lawn. I like to see my garden beautiful. I have pictures of my garden if you would like to see them. I get very upset when my neighbours don't care about their lawn. They are going to make us move because I don't like to see it not look beautiful.

About Myself

I am writing more about myself. I was born in 1939, that makes me fifty-three. And I am going to be married 33 years on June 1. I want to tell you that I am happily married. We have two good boys. Alexander is 33 years old and he is a policeman. We have a younger son, Ted Jr. He would like to be a civil engineer. We are a very happy family and we are a close family. We are very lucky with our sons. They don't give us any problems. They don't smoke or drink or use any drugs.

Werner Vogelsang

My Trip to the Future

After living 6 years in the northern part of Ontario, Gerda and I decided that it was time to relocate in a different part of the country. We had made friends with a family that was stationed in the North Bay Air Force Base and had spent 10 years of criss-crossing the country from base to base. Jean, my friend's wife was also fed up with the gypsy life and gave her husband, Norm, the ultimatum of either moving home or she would leave him. Well, Norm didn't have too much choice because his 5 kids needed their dad. When we asked them where home was and Jean and Norm told us about the beautiful Vancouver Island in B.C. with its gorgeous capital city, Victoria, we were all excited and ready to move. A few small problems were on our minds but nothing too complex for us to handle. Well, the problem was money! Neither of us had enough money to pay a moving company to transport the belongings of 2 families with a total of 7 kids and 4 adults. A number of get-togethers, picnics and brainstorm meetings still left us without the $3,000 we needed to fulfil our dreams.

One evening Norm came to visit us and brought a Toronto newspaper. He pointed out an advertisement for a drive-a-way service, which explained their need for drivers to deliver vehicles to the west. The following day our small problem was resolved with a telephone conversation to

the drive-a-way service. We were advised that any vehicle we desired to drive was available. The first question that came to our minds was, what is your largest vehicle available? Well, a three ton truck was the answer, but it had no box, only a chassis. That's no good we exclaimed. We would like something large because there are eleven of us and we would like to travel together. We wouldn't have dared tell him that we'd have liked to move household belongings from two families. Luck had it that his answer was, "Well, in that case we have a school bus that needs to be delivered to Lethbridge, Alberta." That's our vehicle was the immediate answer. A pick up date was confirmed and on the 19th of July in 1963 I made my way by 4 seater airplane to Toronto. I will never forget that day in my life, because that happened to be my birthday. Well, to me that was the best birthday present I have ever had. After a 5 hour journey by plane, bus and taxi I finally arrived at a small office in Toronto right in the middle of the city. I wasn't sure if it was the right place because there were no cars, trucks or school buses in sight. It was the right place; the office assured me that I would get my bus but after the formalities had been filled out the good news was presented to me. The bus had to be picked up in Woodstock! "Oh!" I said. "How far is that from here?" About 150 miles south I was told. "How do I get there?" "Take the taxi to the bus depot and then the bus to Woodstock," was the answer.

With a disappointed smile, and my papers in my hands I left his office on my way to Woodstock. With a bit of luck, 15 minutes after arriving at the bus stop I departed to Woodstock. Another 4 hours of patience and finally at 4:30 in the afternoon I arrived in Woodstock.

A taxi brought me to a bus factory where at least 200 buses stood parked on a place the size of 2 football fields. The people in the office had not expected me, therefore no arrangements were prepared. The first thing I was asked was, "Do you have a temporary licence number?" "No," was the answer. "Well, you have to go up town to City Hall to buy your licence that you put in the windshield and City Hall closes at 5:00 p.m." Boy was I happy that I had told the taxi driver to wait. Well, we just made it in the nick of time. When I got back to the bus yard the man asked me, "Which bus do you want?" "The biggest one," was my answer. 20 minutes later I was sitting in a brand new 37 foot 50 seater school bus destined to go 450 miles north. By that time 12 hours had passed since I had left my home. After winding through the city traffic, stopping for gas and a bite to eat, I got my way on to the 401 north and then slowly felt the fatigue.

My only intention was to reach my home in Larder Lake, a small mining town 22 miles east of Kirkland Lake. I also realized that I would not last another 12 hours without sleep. With all these thoughts going through my head I noticed a lone hitch-hiker in the distance. As I came closer it appeared to me that he was

dressed in an Army uniform. For some reason he looked trustworthy to me and I put on the brakes. When my bus came to a stop and he approached the door I asked him, "Where do you want to go?" The answer was, "Up north." So, I said, "Where up north?" "You probably don't know that place," was his answer. "Well, try me," I replied. "Kirkland Lake," he muttered! "Well, come on in," was my answer, "Sit down and make yourself comfortable because that's where I am going." I saw a sigh of relief on his face. As soon as he had settled down I told him that I had been up since 6 a.m. and I had to get to Larder Lake by the next morning. "I will give you a free ride to Kirkland Lake if you promise you will not go to sleep and make sure I will not fall asleep. You must talk to me, tell me anything, make up stories or tell me your life story. I don't care just do not let me go to sleep."

I never knew my passenger's name but when I stopped to let him out he thanked me for the ride and we parted as if we were friends for a long time.

He was glad to get a 400 mile ride for free and agreed to my conditions. The first couple of hours went quite well because he told me who he was, where he served and how he wanted to spend his vacation; however, around 2 in the morning it got tough for both of us even though we'd stretched our legs a bit every time I gassed up. He kept his word and told me stories that I still remember and we both witnessed the beautiful Ontario sunrise at 6 a.m. when we approached the town of Kirkland Lake.

I never knew my passenger's name but when I stopped to let him out he thanked me for the ride and we parted as if we were friends for a long time. Now I was on my own for the last 22 miles.

Well, I must have fallen asleep a hundred times because many people honked their horns when they approached me. These must have been the longest 22 miles I have ever driven. When I finally approached my house my family was already up and waiting patiently. After the well deserved greetings all I wanted was my bed.

As I awoke in the late afternoon I heard a lot of hustle and bustle going on in our house. Our friends, Norm and Jean, and my wife, Gerda, had already started to load the bus with most of our belongings. All the small items were neatly packaged in boxes, which we had collected from grocery stores some weeks before. A total of 85 boxes were stashed under the seats. Most of the other small furnishings got neatly packed on the seats. Right on top of everything and along the windows we put all the mattresses and we had plenty, 17 in total between the two families.

Gerda and the children

Werner at the Saskatchewan border

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Nearly 2 days were used to pack the bus, our family car and Norm's Volkswagen van and a 16 foot camping trailer that Norm intended to pull with his Volkswagen.

On July 22nd our journey to the west began and a three vehicle and one trailer caravan set off to Highway-11 north-west. I was driving the bus, Gerda, our family car, a 57 dodge, and Norm trailing with his Volkswagen and the overloaded trailer. We all had identical road maps and had marked off every stop. We intended to re-assemble in case we got too far apart. Gerda had the fastest vehicle and usually had the coffee on the Coleman camp stove by the time we got caught up. Our nights were spent around a camp fire where a good supper was served. Norm and Jean spent the nights in their camping trailer and their 3 older kids bunked down in the Volkswagen van, one bench seat for each of them. We had about 18 inches of space left between the mattresses and the roof from the bus. You can guess where we slept. This was the middle of summer and we were still in the northern part of Ontario and the mosquitos, black flies and no-see-ums had a field day with us. The temperature doesn't cool off at night as much as it does on the coast. The first few nights didn't give us the rest we required.

On the third day we finally crossed the border at the Lake Head at Thunder Bay and left our beautiful Ontario behind us.

Occasionally checking into a motel for a good night's sleep and a thorough cleaning allowed us to continue our trip refreshed and recharged. The changes in scenic horizons and the incredible flat country of our beautiful Canadian prairies had given us some memorable, breathtaking pictures. A stop for gas and groceries in Saskatoon created a bit of a gathering of local shoppers. About 20 people gathered around my bus and wondered what a school bus full of mattresses was doing on a mall parking lot. Jean and Norm had just returned from a store and saw all those people milling around the bus. They joined right in with the crowd and Jean said, "Isn't that strange, a school bus full of mattresses! He must be a mattress salesman." Many time have we laughed over that statement.

Lethbridge, Alberta was our final destination to deliver the bus. The yellow pages provided us with moving and storage companies in that city. A phone call confirmed a place to unload our cargo. Late in the afternoon the bus was finally empty and ready for delivery. The company that took delivery was a large motor vehicle dealership located on the outskirts of the city. Norm accompanied me for the delivery and the person in charge invited us in to the office after a thorough inspection of the vehicle. I expected a return of my $50 insurance payment which I had paid in Toronto. The attendant had a short discussion with his supervisor and returned to us with

$125.00. His explanation was that the extra $75.00 was for us having chosen to deliver a bus instead of a car. That money was an additional gas allowance. At any rate it was a welcome surprise to me.

Lethbridge is a medium size town, very clean and has a lovely overnight campground near a river that flows right through town. That location was our next stopover for the following three days.

About 20 people gathered around my bus and wondered what a school bus full of mattresses was doing on a mall parking lot.

We had a 9' x 9' tent in the trunk of our car, a box of food with some cutlery and paper plates and a box of summer clothing. Our two children were 5 1/2 and 2 1/2 years old and enjoyed the camping and play time with Norm and Jean's 5 kids. The leisure time in beautiful sunshine was a welcome rest until Norm decided to give his old army buddy in Great Falls, Montana, just 180 miles south of the border, a call. His name is Wayne Picket and he was a sheriff's deputy for the city of Great Falls. It didn't take much convincing from his side when he said that Great Falls had a country fair in progress and superstars like Jimmy Dean and Connie Francis would be performers on stage. We left our tent pitched up, Norm's trailer and our car parked and the eleven of us piled into Norm's Volkswagen van and off to Great Falls we went. Wayne and his wife, Priscilla, had a small two bedroom house with a basement and welcomed us to their house with open arms. Gerda and I had never met them before and we had never experienced that kind of hospitality in our lives. Wayne's job was to patrol the fair grounds riding on his horse dressed in his sheriff's uniform, with his 45 Colt on his side. At 2 in the afternoon, the following day, our whole gang met him at the gate. Wayne escorted us in a very official way through the gate to the grand stand. Other spectators tried to slip through the gate with us but Wayne made them go through the ticket booth and pay their $10.00 entrance fee.

We had a wonderful time and enjoyed the hospitality thoroughly. It is amazing what can happen when one lets nature take its course. To tell the kids, "This is your bed for the night," was hopeless because there were no beds to be had. All we passed out was blankets and pillows and told the kids to find a place to sleep. The sight was a picture to be seen. All over the basement floor on the carpet were little bundles of exhausted, well fed creatures curled up in their own way. We spent the whole week with the Pickets' and we had our last picnic at a park by the Missouri River.

This picnic site was a very beautiful spot. The powerful Missouri River with its copper-red washed out riverbanks winds through a mountainous, scenic countryside. The kids explored the surroundings and discovered a 12 foot

bull snake which stirred up quite a commotion. We all had an enjoyable day with good food, drink and beautiful sunshine.

The whole gang packed into the Volkswagen the following morning and headed back to Lethbridge, Alberta with an experience and memories that last a lifetime.

We spent one more night in our tent in Lethbridge and after packing all our belongings into the car trunk the journey continued to Calgary where the prehistoric zoo with its dinosaurs and other interesting history presented another educational day.

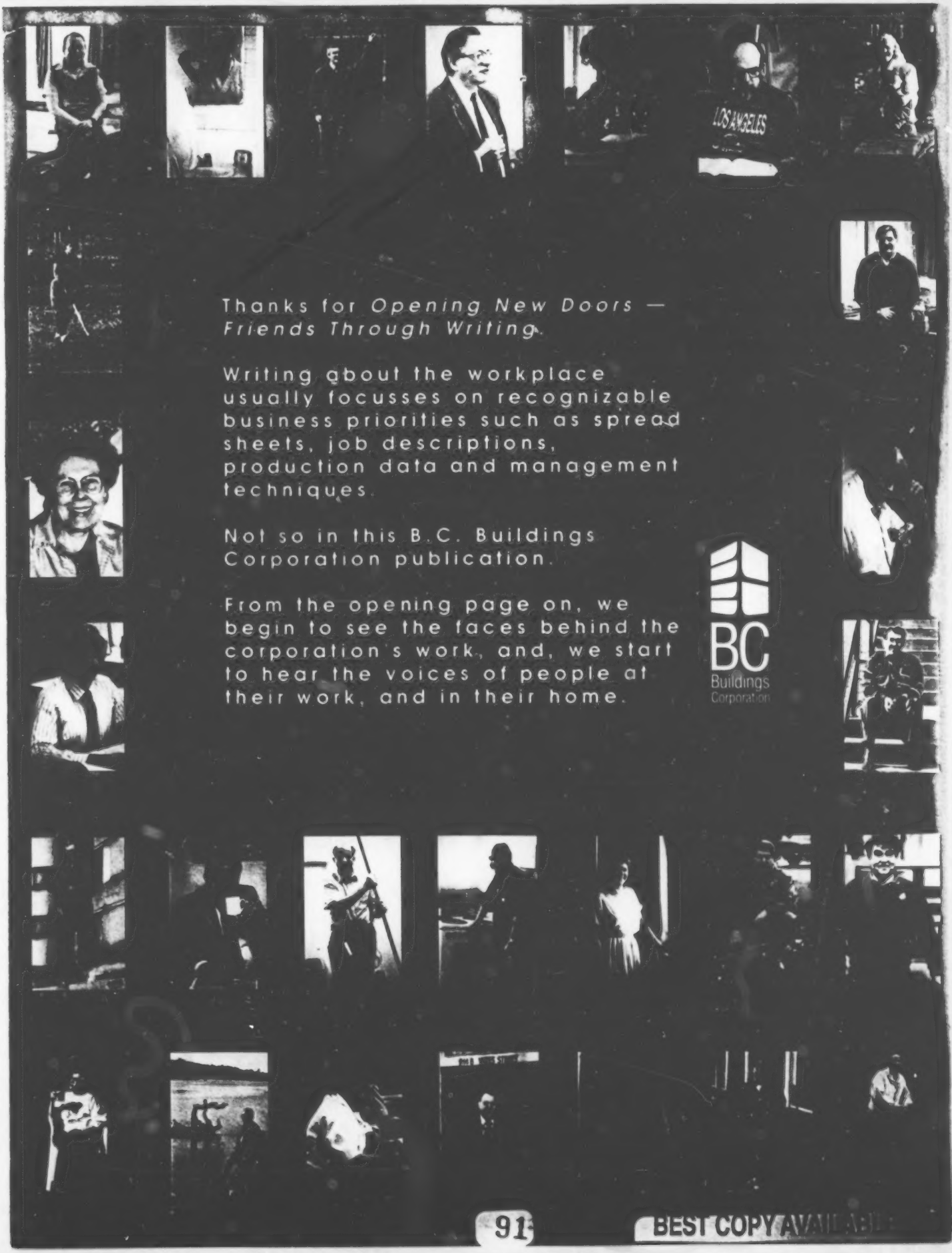
We entered British Columbia at the Great Divide where the river splits and part of it flows east and the other part west.

The Yellowhead Highway from Edmonton to Jasper and a leisurely camping trip through the Canadian Rockies occupied our next two weeks. These gigantic mountains in their majestic settings are overwhelming to the eye and the soul. Slowly winding southward toward Banff we were beginning to realize that time and money were running out for us. Our final anticipated destiny was still some 500 miles away and school for the kids would soon be starting. This new home on Vancouver Island that we had been searching for was still a dream for us.

We entered British Columbia at the Great Divide where the river splits and part of it flows east and the other part west. Travelling westward through the colourful Okanagan Valley we sampled its beautiful fruit which was displayed on numerous roadside stands. On arrival at the ferry terminal in Tsawwassen bound for Victoria, Norm found out that he was twenty dollars short to pay for his ferry crossing. After we helped him out of his dilemma and paid for our fare we were left with five dollars to our name.

The first impression of Vancouver Island and the City of Victoria did not disappoint us. Goldstream Park became the overnight accommodation for the next 5 days. Job hunting and a search for a more permanent residence was my daily activity. It seemed like a guardian angel was looking out for us. A very kind-hearted landlord let us occupy one of his furnished apartments in View Royal when I assured him that I had found a job and the first paycheque would be to pay the rent.

We slowly started to function as a normal family again and our trip to the future provided us with prosperity and new roots in this great country of ours.



Thanks for *Opening New Doors — Friends Through Writing*.

Writing about the workplace usually focusses on recognizable business priorities such as spread sheets, job descriptions, production data and management techniques.

Not so in this B.C. Buildings Corporation publication.

From the opening page on, we begin to see the faces behind the corporation's work, and, we start to hear the voices of people at their work, and in their home.

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